Smith College

Campus Use Plan

Volume 1: Planning Framework

2026–2056

A Campus Designed for Discovery, Leadership, and Belonging

Smith College

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Smith 2026



Smith 2056



Incremental Vision

The Smith College Campus Use Plan (CUP) establishes an incremental approach to achieving a long-term vision. Structured as a sequence of coordinated phases over 5-, 10-, and 30-year horizons, individual projects are designed to collectively advance a cohesive 21st-century campus.



Smith Today

The existing campus is analyzed as an integrated system of buildings, landscapes, mobility networks, and infrastructure.



Early Actions

Near-term projects are identified to deliver high impact with limited investment and build early momentum for implementation.



Ten Year Vision

Over the ten-year horizon, prioritized capital projects address the most critical campus needs.



...And Beyond

Longer-term, aspirational initiatives extend beyond the ten-year horizon to realize the full campus vision by 2056.

Letter From the President



Dear Friends,

For more than 150 years, Smith College graduates have helped transform the role of women in society, and our campus has evolved alongside that legacy, serving current students while anticipating future needs. Last year, the Smith community launched a comprehensive campus planning effort to honor Sophia Smith's vision while supporting a modern, global institution. I am pleased to introduce the result: the Campus Use Plan (CUP).

Led by a steering committee of staff, faculty, students, and trustees, the process engaged our community in envisioning the future of our buildings, grounds, and campus systems. The CUP translates the priorities of our strategic plan, Compass 2035, into the places where we — and those who follow — will live, learn, and work. It connects our academic mission, community well-being, and commitment to sustainability to long-term decisions about facilities, landscape, and infrastructure.

As a guide, the CUP helps Smith make strategic, values-driven choices about our campus environment in alignment with Compass 2035 goals and initiatives. It balances bold aspirations with practical pathways forward. While the plan outlines a 10-year blueprint for campus renewal and capital investment, its flexibility allows us to respond to new opportunities and protect the long-term value of our resources.

I am deeply grateful to the more than 2,000 students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members who helped shape the CUP's recommendations. The result is unmistakably Smith — a plan that supports creativity, connection, and belonging for generations to come. With the CUP, we reaffirm our commitment to stewarding our campus thoughtfully and collectively, honoring its beauty and purpose in the service of Smith's mission.

Sincerely,

Sarah Willie-LeBreton
President

Executive Sponsor:

David DeSwert, Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration

Steering Committee Members:

Salma Baksh ’28

Reid Bertone-Johnson, Lecturer in Landscape Studies

Betsy Carpenter ’93, Associate Vice President for Development

Deanna Dixon ’88, Dean of Admission

Lile R. Gibbons ’64, Trustee

Alexandra Keller, Vice President for Campus Life and Dean of the College

Catherine P. Koshland ’72, Trustee

Erinn McGurn ’94, Associate Vice President for Sustainable Capital Programs

Denise McKahn, Associate Provost

John Singler, Associate Vice President for Enterprise Applications and Data Services

Fraser Stables, Associate Dean of Integrative Learning and Professor of Art

Project Manager:

Allison Page, Campus Planning Project Manager

Campus Planning Support:

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AC Manning ’25, Campus Planning Intern

Katelyn Pham ’26, Campus Planning Intern

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Mary Anne Ocampo, Principal-In-Charge

Tyler Patrick, Principal Planner

Ian Scherling, Associate Principal Landscape Architect

Ivelisse Otero, Associate Principal Architectural Designer

Tamar Warburg, Associate Principal Architect and Director of Sustainability

Marianne Quirk, Senior Associate Planner and Project Manager

Diane Athaide, Associate Urban Designer

BinBin Ma, Associate Landscape Architect

Ilka Lin, Associate Urban Designer

AC Manning ’5, Seven Sisters Planning Intern

Tingyue Tan, Practitioner Landscape Designer

Qiuying Sun, Associate Urban Designer

Lan Ge, Senior Associate Urban Designer

KMA: Accessibility Planning

Josh Safdie, Managing Principal

Thornton Tomasetti: Sustainability Planning

Amanda Garvey, Vice President

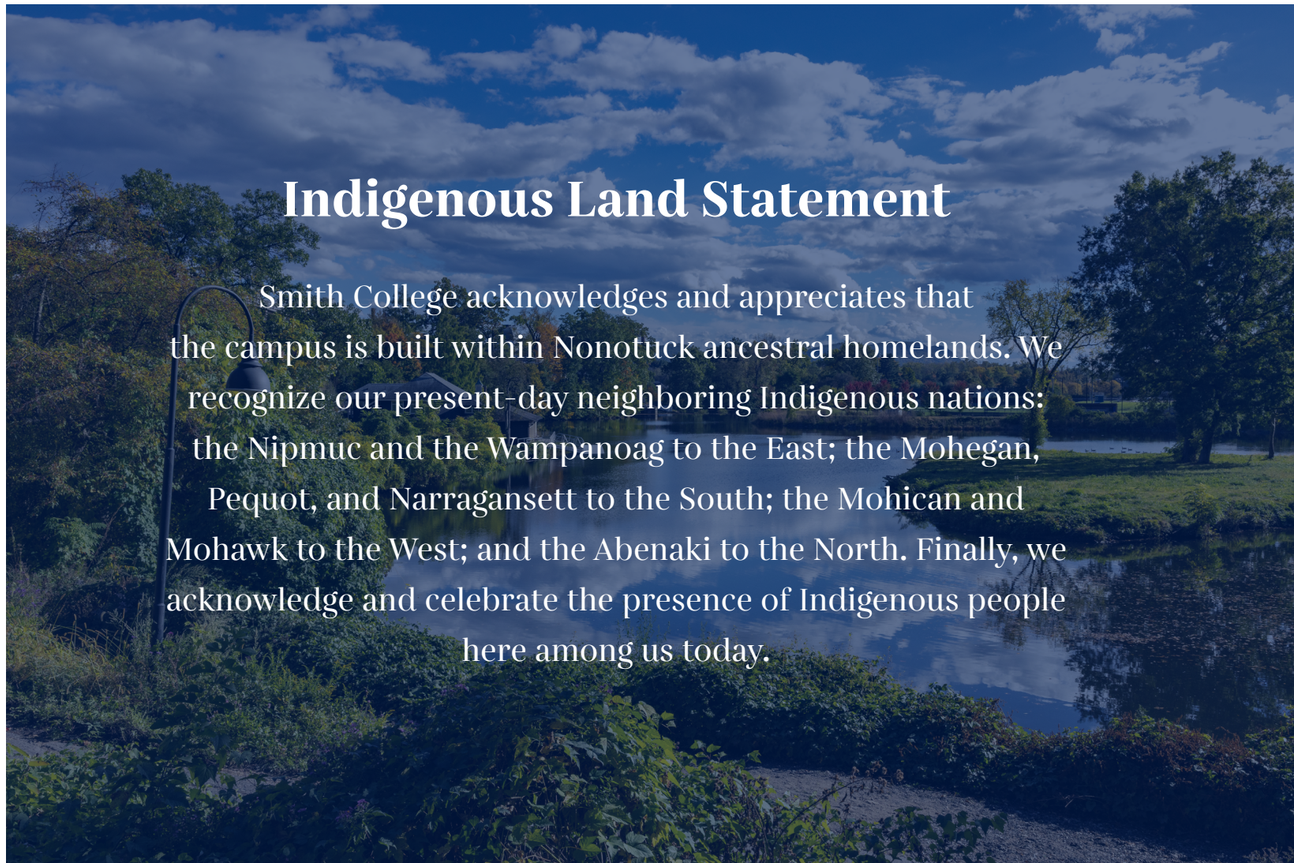
Kenny Teeter, Associate Engineer

We extend a special thanks to our colleagues across the college for their partnership and considerable and invaluable input. This work was made possible by the contributions of Alumnae Relations, Athletics, the Botanic Garden, CEEDS, Class Deans, Communications & Marketing, Dining Services, Campus Services, Operation & Maintenance, the Registrar, and Student Affairs. We also express our gratitude to the Building Committee, Campus Planning Committee, Classroom Committee, Committee on Mission and Priorities, Faculty and Staff Councils, House Presidents’ Association, and the Student Government Association.

Acknowledgments

The Campus Use Plan is a living framework that will continue to rely on community involvement as it moves from vision to implementation.

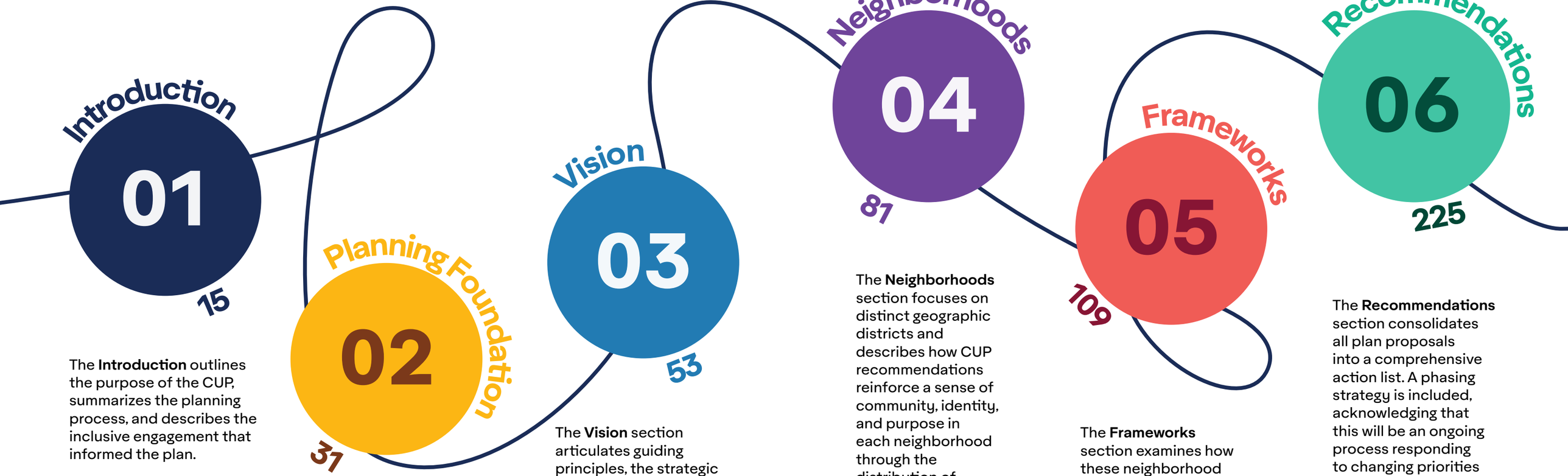
The CUP was shaped by the voices and perspectives from across the Smith community. Over 2,000 people participated in workshops, surveys, focus groups, and guided tours over the last year, and we extend our sincere thanks to the students, faculty, staff, alums, trustees, and community partners who participated so thoughtfully in this process. Your ideas, questions, and lived experiences informed every stage of the work, helping to ensure that the plan reflects Smith’s unique culture and values. Grounded in a shared vision of discovery, belonging, and leadership, we are excited to bring this work to fruition together and are grateful for the generosity of time, insight, and commitment that made this shared vision possible.



Indigenous Land Statement

Smith College acknowledges and appreciates that the campus is built within Nonotuck ancestral homelands. We recognize our present-day neighboring Indigenous nations: the Nipmuc and the Wampanoag to the East; the Mohegan, Pequot, and Narragansett to the South; the Mohican and Mohawk to the West; and the Abenaki to the North. Finally, we acknowledge and celebrate the presence of Indigenous people here among us today.

Document Structure



The **Introduction** outlines the purpose of the CUP, summarizes the planning process, and describes the inclusive engagement that informed the plan.

The **Planning Foundation** situates the CUP within the context of concurrent and prior studies, Smith's campus history, its context and character, and its role as a women's college. This section also includes findings related to space needs and enrollment projections, and identifies the primary drivers that shaped the CUP.

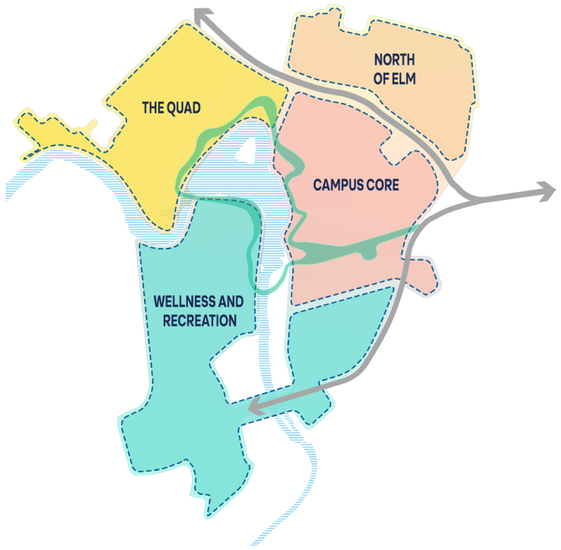
The **Vision** section articulates guiding principles, the strategic vision, and big ideas that inform both the early actions and longer-term aspirations for the Smith campus.

The **Neighborhoods** section focuses on distinct geographic districts and describes how CUP recommendations reinforce a sense of community, identity, and purpose in each neighborhood through the distribution of campus resources and amenities.

The **Frameworks** section examines how these neighborhood systems coordinate on a campuswide scale to guide the physical development of the campus. These frameworks address aspects such as academics, campus and house life, wellness and recreation, mobility and access, sustainability, and more. Key findings define goals within each framework and initial recommendations are introduced to address the needs and priorities of each system.

The **Recommendations** section consolidates all plan proposals into a comprehensive action list. A phasing strategy is included, acknowledging that this will be an ongoing process responding to changing priorities and evolving funding opportunities. This section positions the CUP as a flexible road map to guide decision-making.

Key Terms



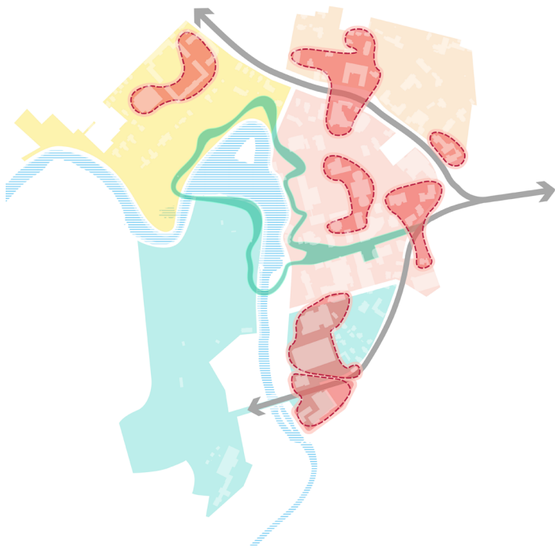
NEIGHBORHOOD

A defined geographic area characterized by a distinct identity, land use mix, and function within campus.



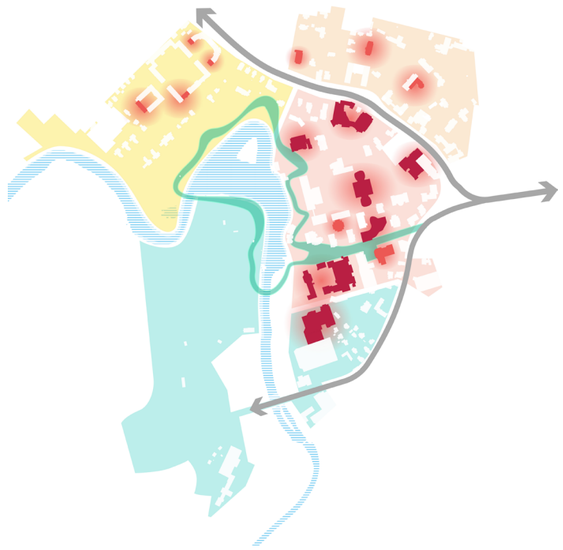
FRAMEWORK

A strategic organizational structure that defines a system.



CLUSTER

A deliberate grouping of related uses, activities, or program elements in close proximity to enhance synergy, efficiency, and accessibility.



HUB

A campus hub or neighborhood destination that concentrates programs and activity.

Campus Use Plan Structure

The Campus Use Plan is structured as a multi volume series. *Volume 1: Planning Framework* introduces the project, provides an overview of the research and engagement process, and establishes guiding principles that are built on the mission and values of the college. These guiding principles are translated into systems of spatial organization, shown first at the neighborhood scale then through distinct but interconnected campus frameworks. Volume 1 concludes with a series of actionable recommendations and a proposed phasing strategy that will serve as a flexible roadmap for the future of development at Smith.

Volume 2: Appendix consolidates additional engagement findings from in-person meetings and the MyCampus survey, accessibility reports for pathways and key buildings on campus, and concept alternatives that were considered during the planning process.

Volume 1
Planning Framework

- Introduction
- Planning Foundation
- Vision
- Neighborhoods
- Frameworks
- Recommendations

Volume 2
Appendix

- Engagement Analysis
- Accessibility Reports
- Concept Alternatives

01

Introduction

Dear Reader,

On behalf of the Campus Use Plan Steering Committee, we are pleased to share the Campus Use Plan (CUP), a flexible and shared reference point to guide campus development and capital planning over the next decade and beyond. The CUP integrates Smith's prior plans and facilities studies with new data and broad campus engagement to articulate a shared vision for our physical campus. From this work, tailored recommendations build upon Smith's unique academic model, house system, historic architecture, and Olmsted-designed landscape. Together, the plan ensures future investments enhance our ability to deliver on Smith's core mission while preserving the campus's defining physical and cultural characteristics.

The plan also reflects the realities of maintaining a historic campus alongside ever-evolving needs in higher education. It addresses a shared desire for a more connected campus — physically, socially, and technologically — and envisions an environment designed for discovery, leadership, and belonging. The core priorities emerging from the CUP include reinvesting in existing buildings to:

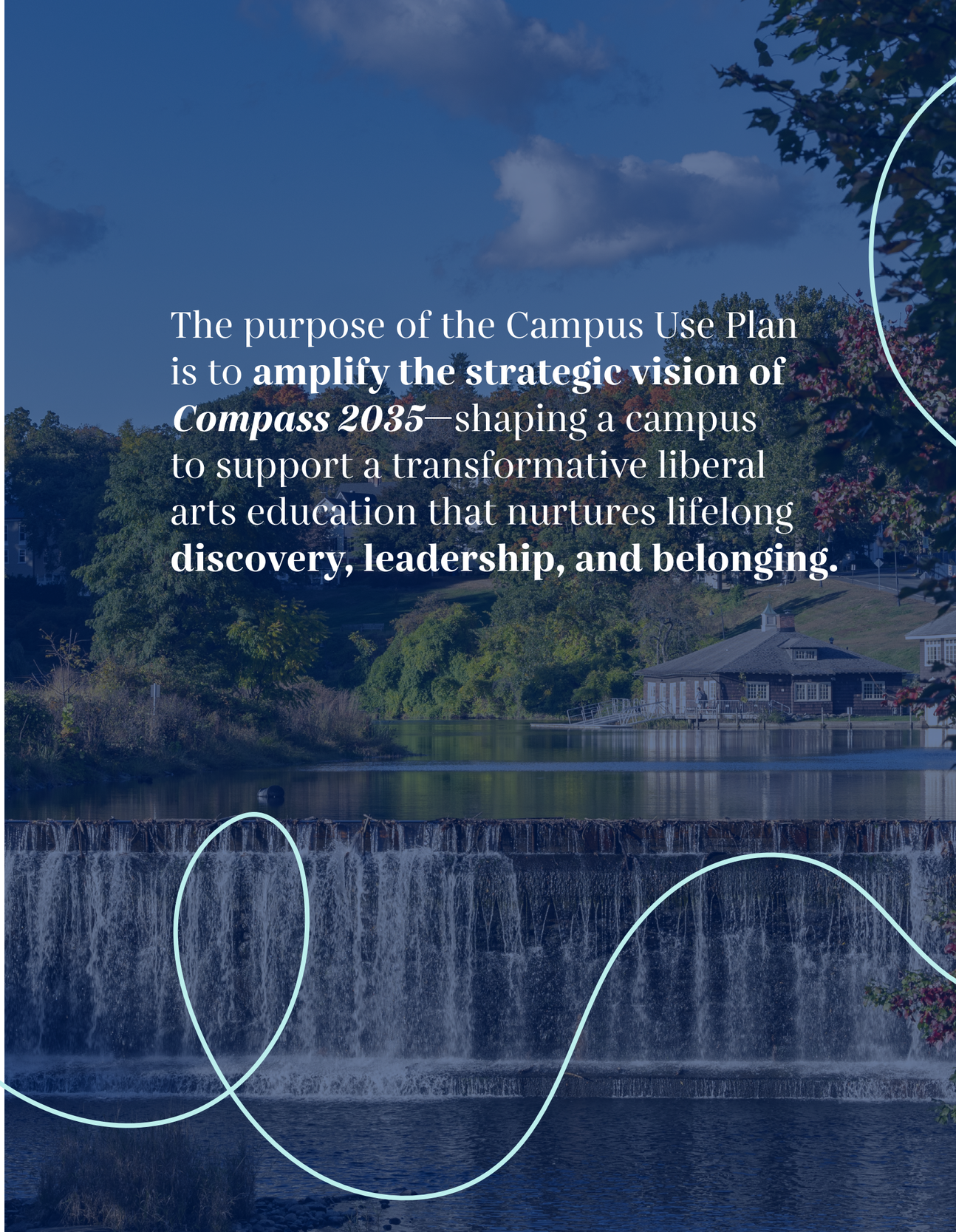
- better support teaching, learning, work, and community life;
- improving adjacencies and shared spaces to foster collaboration and efficiency;
- reimagining campus life through more inclusive and vibrant third spaces, dining, and gathering places;
- integrating athletics and wellness into our daily experience;
- enhancing mobility and wayfinding, and embedding sustainability across buildings, infrastructure, and operations.

In the pages that follow, you will see how the CUP principles and goals will guide future decisions. The plan lays the groundwork for prioritizing projects, sequencing investments, and aligning work across academic, residential, and operational areas. It also ensures potential projects are evaluated through lifecycle costs and long-term operating impacts. Through this approach, the CUP supports responsible stewardship of institutional resources to ensure that campus investments deliver long-term value for both the institution and the community.

We thank the many students, staff, faculty, and alums who contributed to the CUP and welcome their continued input as we pursue its goals, with the understanding that the implementation of the CUP recommendations will be informed by ongoing study, communication, and campus dialogue. Community members are encouraged to reach out with questions or feedback to campususeplan@smith.edu.

David DeSwert, Executive Vice President for Finance & Administration

Erinn McGurn '94, Associate Vice President for Sustainable Capital Programs



Process

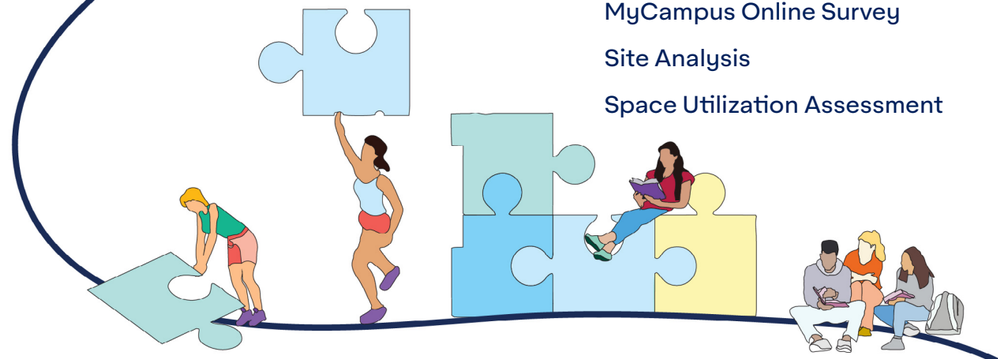
The campus planning process was organized into a three-phase effort over a 12-month period, designed to link strategic planning, institutional values, physical planning, and implementation priorities.

Phase 1: Discovery & Analysis established a shared understanding of Smith College's campus evolution, academic mission, and physical context. This phase examined campus history, existing conditions, space utilization, infrastructure systems, and key challenges while identifying the primary drivers shaping future campus needs.

Phase 2: Concept Development translated this analysis into a set of guiding planning principles and tested multiple concept alternatives. These alternatives explored different physical scenarios for accommodating academic, residential, and operational priorities, allowing the college to evaluate trade-offs related to land use, character, and circulation. A preferred concept was selected through iterative review and refinement.

Phase 3: Implementation & Documentation advanced the preferred concept into a cohesive Campus Use Plan. This phase focused on defining priority projects, establishing phasing strategies, and developing preliminary cost considerations to support informed decision-making and long-term stewardship.

Throughout the process, structured engagement with a campus steering committee, the board of trustees, and a project management group provided strategic guidance, institutional alignment, and ongoing feedback, ensuring that the plan reflects both Smith's mission and operational realities.



PHASE 1:

Data Collection

Community Listening Sessions

Campus Tours

MyCampus Online Survey

Site Analysis

Space Utilization Assessment

PHASE 2:

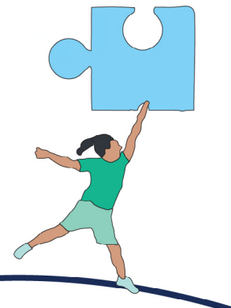
Guiding Principles and Big Ideas

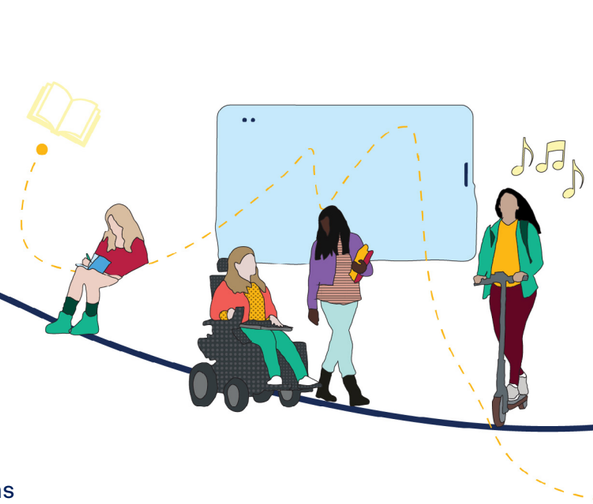
Concept Alternatives

Campus Forums

Sustainability Goals and Energy Strategies

Accessibility Assessments







PHASE 3:

Draft Plan

Recommendations

Campus Use Plan Finalized

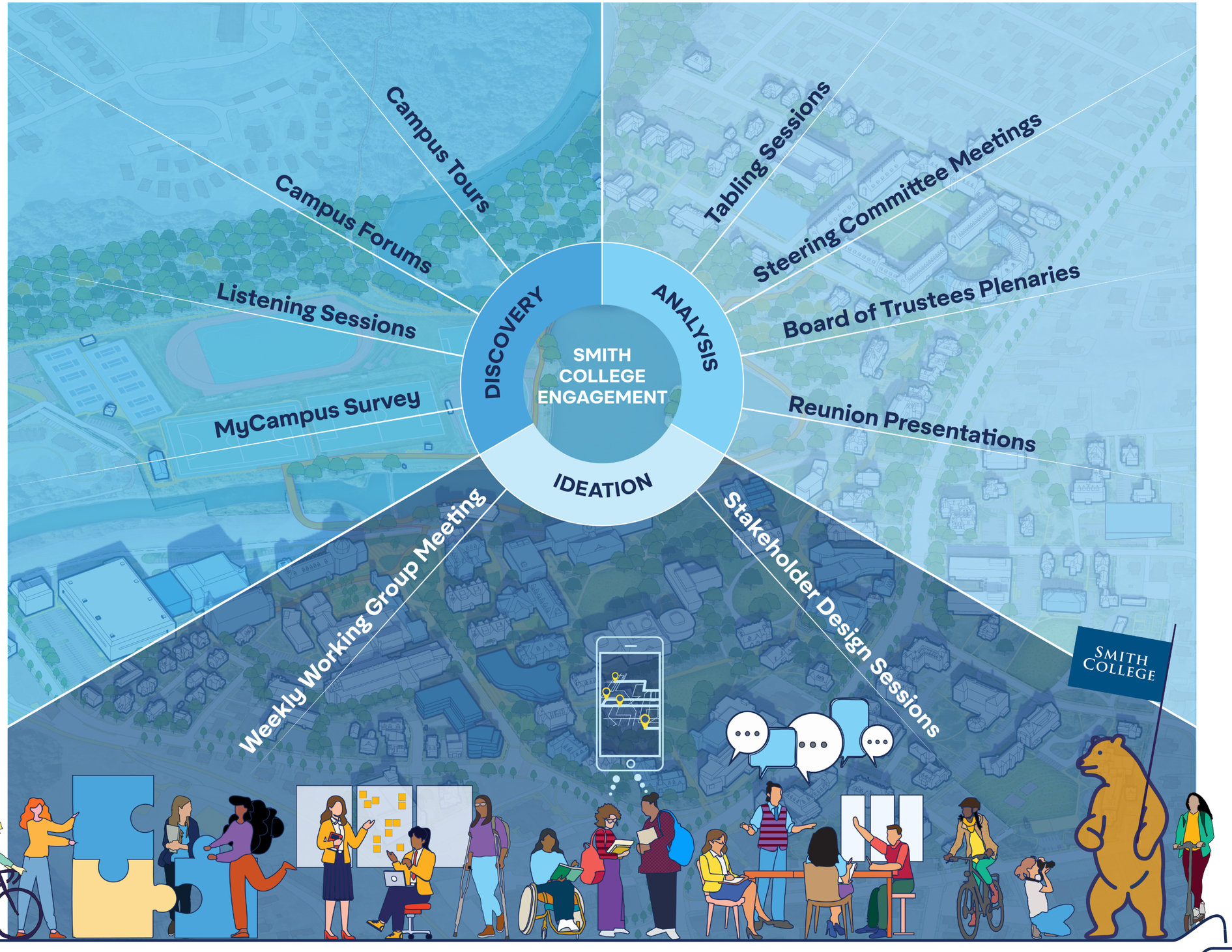
Final Documentation

Engagement Overview

The Smith College and Sasaki teams engaged the campus community through a series of in-person activities aligned with the college's core values of inclusion and transparency. Engagement efforts included campus pop-ups in high-traffic locations, creating informal opportunities for conversation and feedback, as well as structured listening sessions with students, faculty, and staff.

A board of trustees campus tour and presentations at plenary sessions grounded leadership discussions in lived, on-the-ground experiences of the campus, and targeted work sessions with the steering committee provided a forum to synthesize input, test emerging ideas, and ensure that community perspectives directly informed decision-making.

Through this work, Smith's uniqueness as an institution emerged, guiding Sasaki's understanding across the diverse stakeholder groups and informing the development of the Vision and Planning Priorities. Through this work, Smith's uniqueness as an institution emerged, guiding Sasaki's understanding across the diverse stakeholder groups and informing the development of the Vision and Planning Priorities.



Campus Engagement

Over an eight-month period, this work was supported by a robust and sustained engagement process that offered multiple ways for the community to participate. A mix of informal and structured forums—from pop-ups and tours to listening sessions, deep dives, committee meetings, and board discussions—created opportunities for broad participation, thoughtful dialogue, and iterative feedback. This layered approach ensured that ideas were not only gathered, but tested, refined, and carried forward, strengthening the plan's grounding in the lived experiences and perspectives of the Smith community.

25
Listening Sessions

14
Campus Tours

20
Deep-Dive Sessions

4
Community Pop-Ups

2
Campus Forums

6
Steering Committee Meetings

3
Board of Trustees Plenaries


Campus Forum


Board of Trustees Campus Tour



Campus Forum

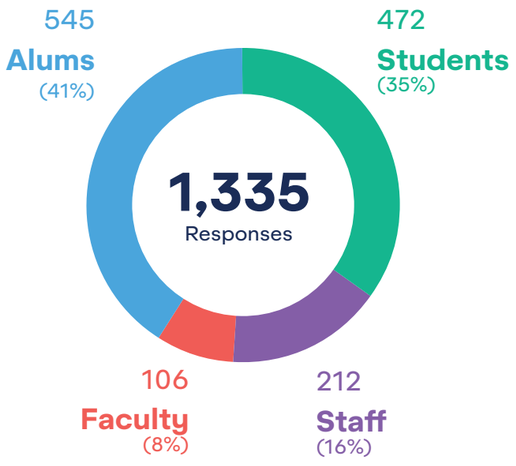

Campus Tour & Listening Session

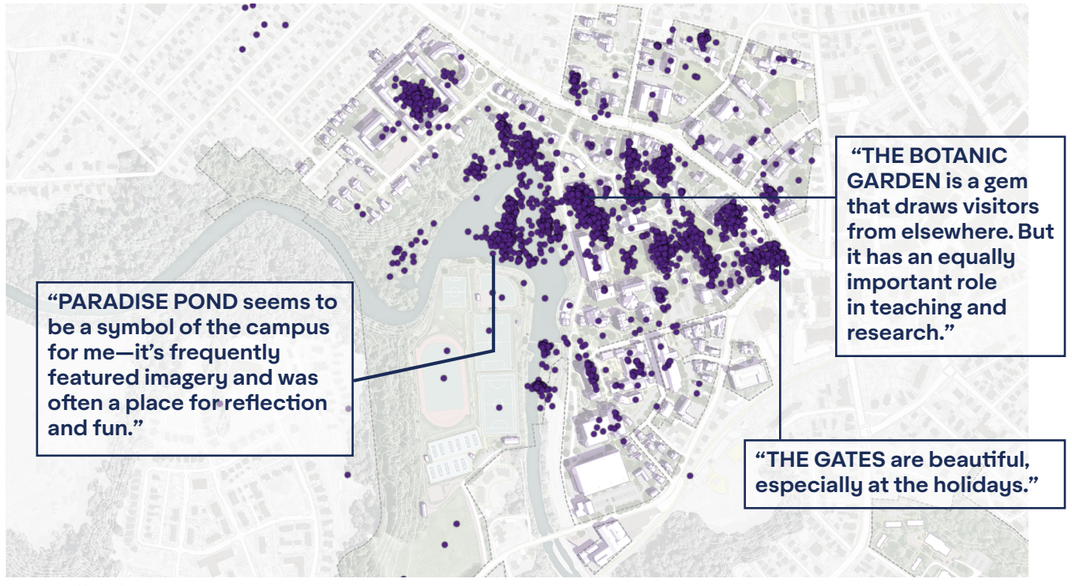

Community Pop-Up


Steering Committee Work Session

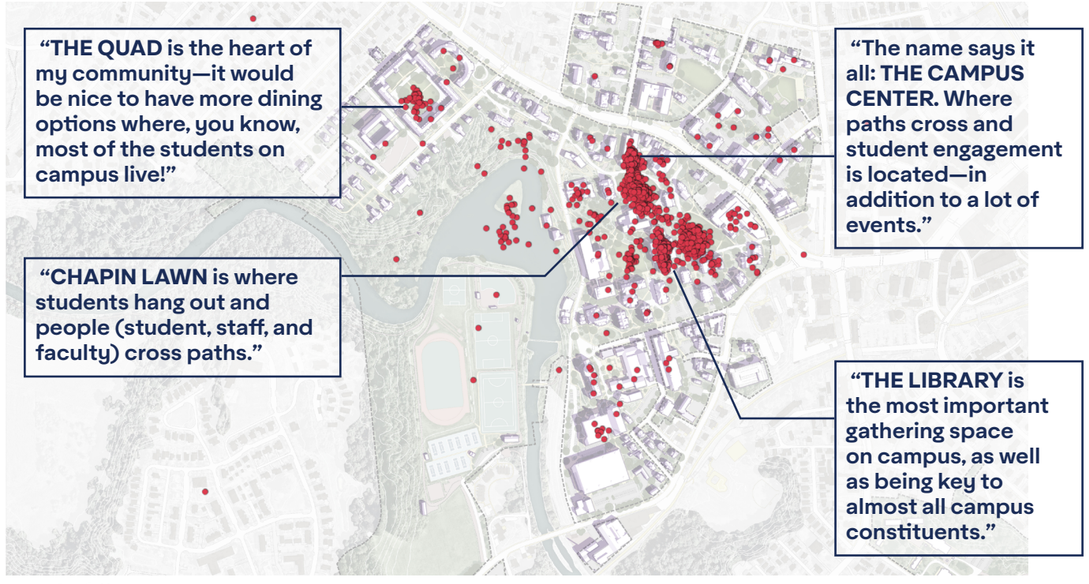
MyCampus Survey

Sasaki Associates collaborated with Smith to launch the MyCampus Survey as a tool for understanding how the campus is perceived, used, and experienced by the community. The interactive, web-based survey received more than 1,300 responses, inviting participants to map and comment on their campus experiences across a range of spatial dimensions, including preferred study and learning areas; welcoming and inclusive spaces; locations that were difficult to access; iconic places and spaces of tradition; favorite settings for socializing and gathering; primary circulation routes, gateways, and thresholds; and areas perceived as unsafe. Collectively, this input provided a nuanced, place-based understanding of daily campus life to inform planning and design decisions, and began to direct the guiding principles toward themes of exploration, agency, and belonging.

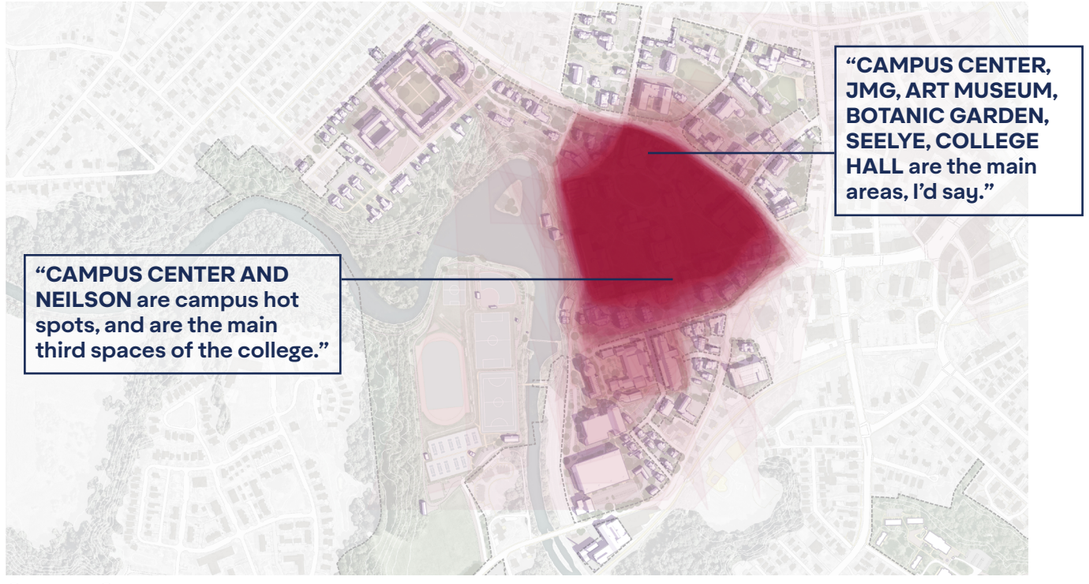




Iconic Spots



Heart of Campus



Campus Core

Student Responses

MyCampus student responses were distributed evenly across classes, with comments indicating that students desire **a community based in inclusivity and belonging**. They seek expanded study spaces and dining options, revitalized social hubs, improved accessibility, wellness resources, and better housing and classrooms **to build a supportive student-centered campus**.

Desired Experiences:

- **Communal**
- **Belonging**
- **Agency**
- **Welcoming**
- **Cozy**

Top Priorities

1. **Study space** - increased amount and type
2. **Dining** - expanded hours and improved access to various options
3. **Social and recreational spaces** - more space that is separate from academics
4. **Outdoor space** - for seating, study, and gathering
5. **Accessibility and inclusion** - improvements desired campus-wide, including classrooms

Staff Responses

For staff, 20% participated in the online survey, with data suggesting that Smith staff value a **welcoming campus** with affordable community dining options, gathering spaces, updated fitness facilities, and enhanced outdoor areas for working and socializing. These assets create an environment **that fosters belonging, promotes well-being, and strengthens work-life balance** across the campus community.

Desired Experiences:

- **Communal**
- **Inclusive**
- **Accessible**
- **Well maintained**
- **Supportive**

Top Priorities

1. **Dining** - affordable options and inclusive facilities
2. **Dedicated areas** - staff lounges and private break areas
3. **Wellness and fitness** - updated and accessible facilities
4. **Outdoor space** - enhanced seating and gathering areas
5. **Workspaces** - improved quality with natural light and comfort

Faculty Responses

MyCampus comments revealed that faculty seek **inclusive and well maintained spaces** that support teaching and research, with priorities being improved dining, a better faculty lounge, and modern classrooms and labs. They desire spaces **that promote collaboration and meet evolving academic needs**.

Faculty responses were 40% from Division III (Natural Sciences/Mathematics), 34% from Division I (Humanities), and 12% from Division II (Social Sciences).

Desired Experiences:

- **Communal**
- **Functional**
- **Flexible**
- **Welcoming**
- **Accessible**

Top Priorities

1. **Dining** - centralized affordable options
2. **Teaching and research spaces** - improved to meet current needs
3. **Gathering areas** - dedicated lounges for faculty
4. **Wellness and fitness** - amenities with flexible schedules
5. **Accessibility and inclusion** - campus design

Alum Responses

Alums were active participants in the survey. Responses indicated that Smith alums value a **balance of tradition and modernity** with vibrant social and study spaces for students, accessible facilities, and improved dining experiences. They would like to see inclusive environments **that cultivate community and support meaningful engagement** across campus.

Desired Experiences:

- **Communal**
- **Nostalgia**
- **Inclusive**
- **Green**
- **Connected**

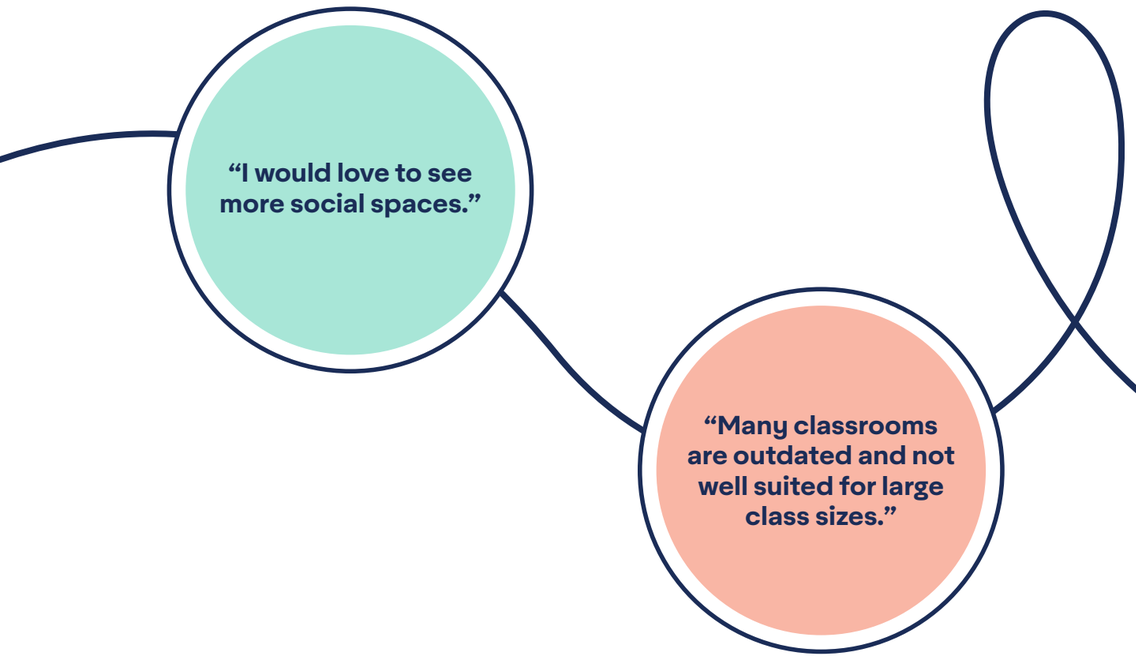
Top Priorities

1. **Dining** - connections to house dining options at reunion
2. **House systems** - preserving and enhancing
3. **Accessibility and inclusion** - universal access
4. **Outdoor space** - preservation and gathering centers
5. **Gathering spaces** - student-centered spaces for socializing, performing, and organizing

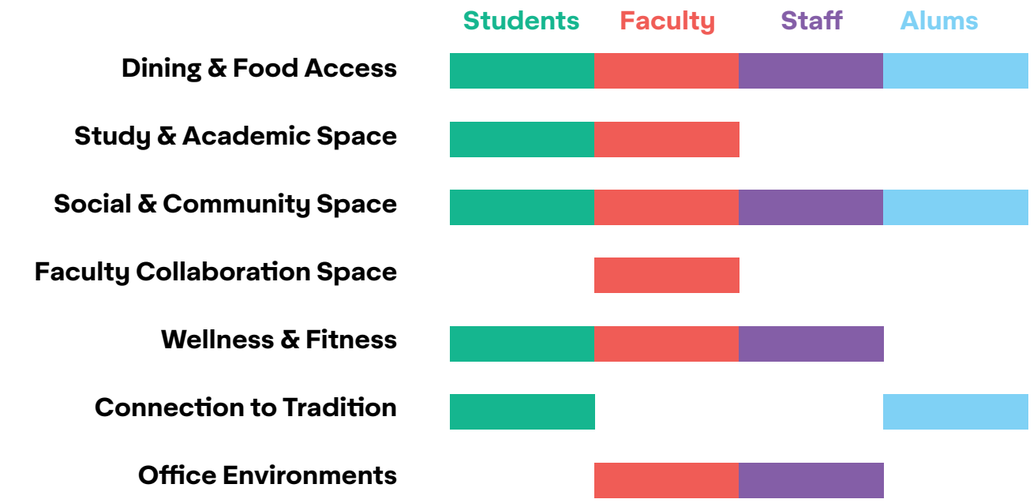
Alignment on Priorities

Guided by robust engagement with students, faculty, staff, and alums, the CUP reflects clear priorities that emerged consistently across stakeholder groups. Foremost was the need for more social and community spaces that strengthen daily connection and belonging, particularly third spaces - defined as a space that is neither work nor home. Students, faculty, and staff emphasized improved dining and food access as well as expanded wellness and fitness opportunities as essential to campus life.

Students and faculty further identified a need for more study and academic spaces that support contemporary learning, while faculty and staff highlighted the importance of high-quality office environments that enable collaboration and focus. Students and alums also underscored the value of honoring Smith's traditions, expressing a desire for the campus to reinforce its distinctive identity and history even as it evolves for the future.



Alignment on Priorities



02

Planning Foundation

Strategic Vision

In 2024, Smith College launched an 18-month strategic planning process to reflect on the college's role in a rapidly changing world. As Smith approached the 150th anniversary of its founding in 2025, President Sarah Willie-LeBreton, together with faculty, students, staff, trustees, and alums, collaborated to articulate a shared and forward-looking vision for the institution.

Compass 2035: A Strategic Plan for Smith College articulates a future grounded in the enduring values of a liberal arts education, a commitment to engaging the world, and Smith's mission to "educate women of promise for lives of distinction and purpose." Focused on strengthening community, navigating change, and advancing the college's mission, *Compass 2035* provides the foundation for the CUP. Together, both plans are unified by a shared guiding phrase: **Discover everywhere. Lead anywhere. Belong here.**

Discovery

Spaces that spark curiosity, creativity, and collaboration—connecting disciplines and inspiring exploration across the liberal arts.

Leadership

Flexible, student-centered spaces that empower agency, collaboration, and empathy—cultivating leaders who shape community and inspire change.

Belonging

Inclusive, welcoming environments that strengthen connection, well-being, and community across dining, living, learning, and recreation.

Discover everywhere.
Lead anywhere.
Belong here.

Compass 2035

Compass 2035 sets a vision and institutional priorities for the next decade. Grounded in Smith's mission and values, the plan articulates a set of four goals, which form an enduring framework that defines future work. The plan emphasizes flexibility and responsiveness, positioning the college to advance its mission while adapting to a changing world. It will serve as a "true north" for institutional planning, helping guide resource allocation, departmental planning, and community collaboration.

Developed in alignment with *Compass 2035,* the CUP translates the college's strategic priorities into physical planning outcomes and represents a first major step in advancing several of the plan's goals. The CUP guides building and landscape ambitions and informs key capital investments in support of the strategic plan. By improving and expanding indoor and outdoor spaces for teaching, learning, scholarship, and well-being, the plan supports academic excellence, community vitality, accessibility, and long-term sustainability, while creating places for both intellectual reflection and social connection.



Academic Experience

Inspire and support academic excellence, exploration, and discovery.



Leadership

Invest in preparing students for fulfilling careers and a lifetime of leadership.



Community Wellness

Foster well-being, belonging, and resilience across our community.

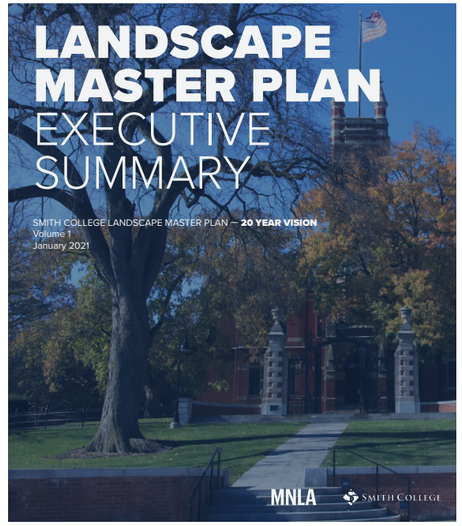


Institutional Sustainability

Strengthen institutional sustainability to ensure the college's enduring contributions to the world.

Integration With Planning and Design Studies

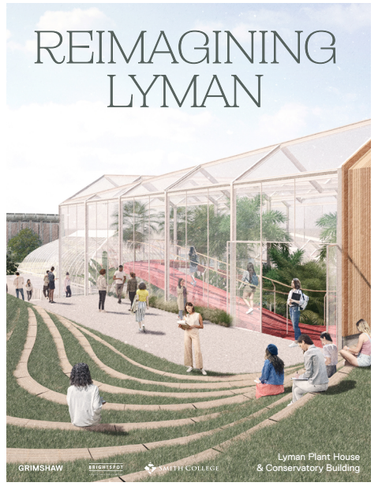
By synthesizing earlier plans and suggesting future studies, the CUP exists as a living document that informs and guides Smith's campus development. In addition to aligning with *Compass 2035*, the CUP integrates other Smith planning studies recently completed or underway, including the 2019 *Learning Spaces Plan*, the 2020 *District Energy Master Plan*, the 2020 *Dining Consolidation Feasibility Study,* the 2022 *Landscape Master Plan,* the 2023 *Reimagining Lyman Study*, and the ongoing *Ainsworth-Scott-Olin Concept Design Study*. Northampton planning studies, including the Picture Main Street project and *Pedestrian & Bicycle Comprehensive Plan,* inform the CUP, as does the 2025 *Five College Consortium FCI Strategic Roadmap.* As referenced throughout the report, a Comprehensive Transportation and Parking Study, an Accessibility Housing Plan, and the development of Sustainable Design Guidelines should be prioritized.



2022



2020



2023



2025

Campus History: A Continuous Evolution

Building Traditions

1870–1918

Smith College's history reflects an evolving commitment to women's education shaped by distinct eras of growth and transformation. Building Traditions (1870–1918) traces back to the college's opening in 1875, made possible by the endowment of Sophia Smith, whose vision established Smith as a leading institution for women, with early campus planning influenced by the landscape principles of Frederick Law Olmsted, and a strong tradition of integrating buildings, open space, and daily life.

1870
The college is endowed by Sophia Smith

1875
Smith College officially opens with 14 students, six faculty members, and three buildings

1893
The first women's collegiate basketball game takes place at Smith

1895
The botanic garden is founded and opens to the public

1910
The Sophian is founded

Growing at Home & Abroad

1918–1945

During Growing at Home & Abroad (1918–1945), Smith expanded its academic reach and global engagement, strengthening international study and intellectual exchange while deepening its residential campus model.

1924
Grécourt Gates constructed to honor the Smith College Relief Unit in France

1926
The Seven Sisters colleges unite to advance women's higher education

1936
Smiffenpoofs is founded, first all-women's collegiate a cappella in the country

Innovation & Collaboration

1945–1990

Innovation & Collaboration (1945–1990) marked a period of curricular experimentation and interdisciplinary growth, including the adoption of the open curriculum, reinforcing student agency and academic flexibility.

1949
WCSR (now WOZQ) has its first broadcast

1965
Five College Consortium is founded

1967
Smith's first computer arrives on campus

1968
Black Students Association is formed, leading the way for unity organizations

1970
Smith institutes an open curriculum

1981
Smith is the first women's college to join the NCAA

Inclusive Education

1990–2021

In Inclusive Education (1990–2020), the college broadened access and representation, aligning academic programs, campus life, and institutional priorities with a more diverse student body.

1990–2000s
Indigenous Studies, Middle East Studies, Landscape Studies and more are introduced

1999
The Picker Engineering Program is established

2010
Smith pioneers institutional climate leadership and commits to carbon neutrality by 2030

2015
The Design Thinking Initiative launches

Accessible Futures

2021–2056

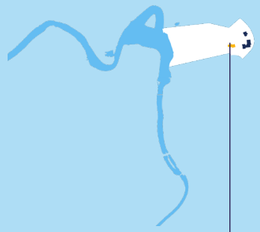
Today, Accessible Futures (2020–present) builds on this legacy by advancing accessibility, sustainability, and belonging, positioning the campus to support contemporary learning, wellness, and community while remaining grounded in Smith's historic mission and landscape traditions.

2022–2027
Geothermal Energy Project advances decarbonization goals

2025
The Next 150 Pledge launches

2025
Compass 2035 Strategic Plan launches

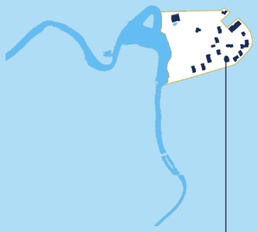
1870 1880 1890 1900 1910 1920 1930 1940 1940 1950 1960 1970 1980 1990 2000 2010 2020 2026 2036 2056



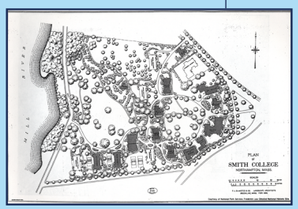
Original Campus



1874 Dewey House



Olmstedian Campus



1893 Olmsted's Campus Plan



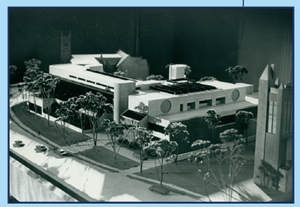
Expanded Campus



1936 Quadrangle Completion



Densified Campus



1972 Fine Arts Center



Modern Campus



2003 Campus Center



A New Vision



2021 New Neilson Library

Setting and Character

Smith's landscape and architecture reflect the distinctive history of the college and form a strong foundation to adapt to contemporary needs.

Existing Campus

Set within a layered landscape of gardens, pathways, and academic quadrangles, Smith College's campus reflects a long-standing dialogue between place, learning, and community. As articulated by President Sarah Willie-LeBreton in her letter introducing *Compass 2035*, the campus is both a steward of Smith's history and a platform for its future—supporting curiosity, care, belonging, and academic excellence while adapting to the needs of new generations of students. Today, the core of Smith's campus encompasses approximately 147 acres and includes 133 buildings totaling roughly 3.2 million gross square feet (GSF).

The diverse architectural character of the campus reflects Smith's enduring commitment to allowing buildings to express the time in which they were constructed, following a directive to *"... build in the manner and the materials of the contemporary world,"* as articulated by former College President Benjamin Fletcher Wright. This layered approach has produced a rich variety of architectural styles and materials that together create a distinctly Smith identity. Balancing the preservation of historic buildings with the inclusion of contemporary architectural expression continues to be an important and sometimes debated aspect of campus evolution, reflecting a broader conversation about continuity and change.

Smith's 46 residential houses comprise approximately 34% of the total campus GSF, underscoring the central role of the house system in shaping daily life and community. Academic and campus life space each account for roughly 19% of total campus GSF, reinforcing the close integration of living, learning, and co-curricular experience that defines the Smith model.

The 1892 campus plan by Olmsted, Olmsted, and Eliot defined the landscape of the campus as a park-like arboretum, guided by principles of scientific classification as well as aesthetics. An informal design utilizes the hillside terrain with sweeping walks and framed vistas, cultivating a culture of intentionality and artfulness that is present today. As noted in the 2022 Landscape Master Plan (LMP), Olmsted's "imprint is still palpable today with stately mature trees punctuating the park-like lawns." However, over time, the campus core has been altered through tree loss and the obstruction of historic views by later buildings. Expanding on ideas explored in the LMP, the CUP advances recommendations to enhance views, strengthen pedestrian pathways, and recalibrate the balance between active and passive landscapes to support a more accessible and connected campus.









"One of the most interesting things about the many buildings of Smith College is how they reflect the changing history of American architecture since that time."

Former College President Benjamin Fletcher Wright



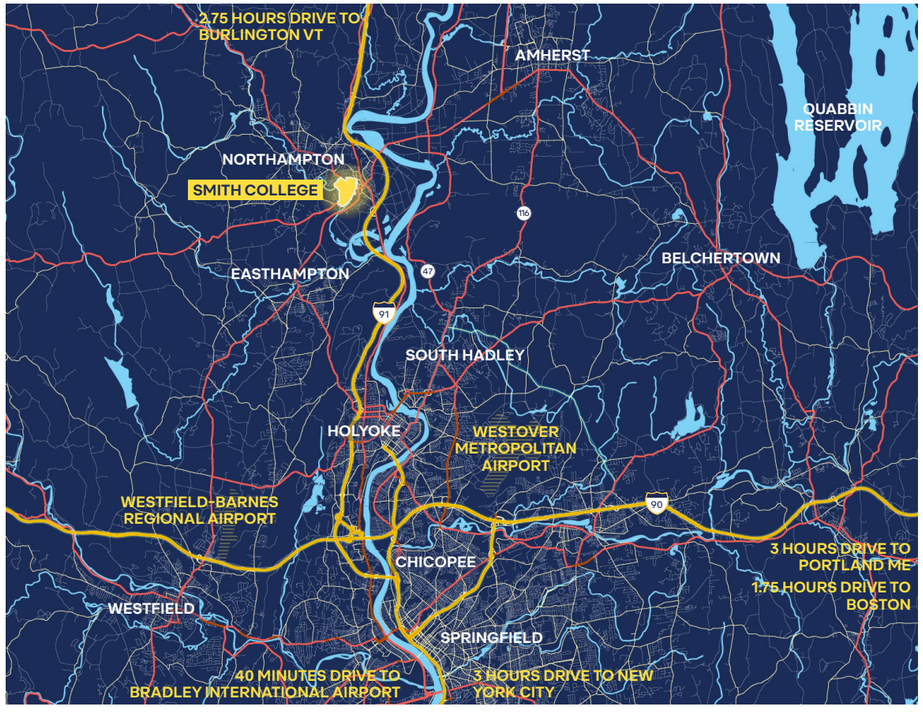
Regional Context

Smith College is located in the city of Northampton, in the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts. It can be accessed from Interstate 91 by automobile, and an Amtrak rail station downtown provides connection to New York City, Springfield, Hartford, and northern Vermont. Interstate buses with similar destinations are available from Northampton and Springfield. Bradley International Airport is a 40-minute drive to the south, and Boston is reachable in less than two hours by car to the east. Local bus services connect Smith with the Five College Consortium—Amherst College, UMass Amherst, Hampshire College, and Mount Holyoke College—and provide limited access to local towns such as Amherst, Easthampton, and Holyoke.

Northampton

Smith's campus is walking distance from downtown Northampton. Built on the land of the Nipmuc and Pocumtuc Nations, Northampton's first industry was in milling, centered on the Mill River. Later, the industry shifted to the manufacturing of silk and textiles. Today, Northampton serves as a cultural and artistic hub, providing a vibrant walkable center with close access to outdoor sites. Smith's campus is open to the broader community, and the Smith College Museum of Art and Botanic Garden's public programming attracts local crowds throughout the year.

Regional Context



Natural Systems

The campus is situated within the Connecticut River watershed in a forested riparian zone that is uniquely adapted to the seasonal flow of water over the river's banks. It has a diverse vegetative cover reflecting its mixture of lowland and mountain settings and is characterized as a floodplain forest that provides habitat for several state-listed rare plant species. The Mount Holyoke Range to the east and the Mount Tom Range to the south are protected sites managed by local conservation groups. The Mill River, a tributary of the Connecticut River, runs through Smith's campus and feeds Paradise Pond, an artificial pond created by the introduction of a dam in the late 1600s.

Natural Systems



People

Smith isn't just a physical campus—it's a dynamic and connected ecosystem shaped by a close-knit community of people who live, learn, teach, and work here. Endowed by Sophia Smith in 1870 to provide women with access to higher education equal to that of men, Smith has since grown into a globally connected institution. Today, the college serves more than 2,500 undergraduates and 300-plus graduate students, supported by more than 1,300 staff and faculty members.

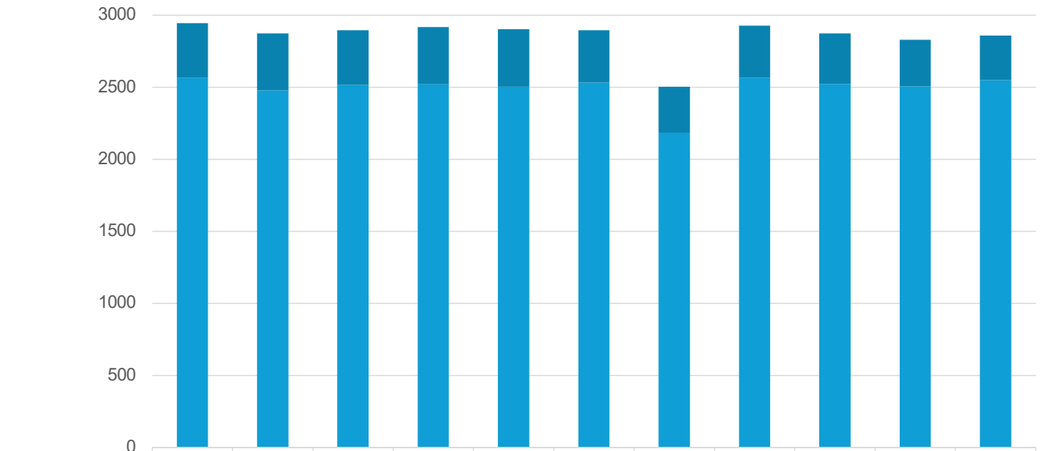
Smith Students

The Smith student body is made up of a diverse population. In fall 2025, the college welcomed undergraduates from 47 U.S. states and 65 countries, with 36% identifying as students of color, 19% as first-generation, and 13% as international. Academically, nearly 50% of undergraduates major in Natural Science & Math, while 30% pursue majors in Humanities & Arts, 26% in Social Science, and 19% in Inter-Divisional programs.

Enrollment

Over the last decade, total enrollment has hovered around 2,850 with undergraduate enrollment approximately 2,550 students and graduate enrollment about 350 students. All enrollment declined temporarily during the 2021–21 academic year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In fall 2025, total enrollment was 2,915 students with undergraduate enrollment at 2,578 and graduate enrollment at 337.

Smith Enrollment from 2014-2025



	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
Graduates	380	396	382	397	401	363	321	360	350	324	308
Undergraduates	2563	2478	2514	2521	2502	2531	2183	2566	2523	2506	2549

At a Glance

2,900+
Undergraduate and graduate students

1,000+
Staff

350+
Faculty in 50 academic departments and programs

8:1
Student-faculty ratio

46
Self-governing house communities accommodating between 10-100 students

54,000
Undergraduate alums and graduate degree recipients located in 119 countries

33.1%
Undergraduate Students of Color 2024-2025

Domestic SOC includes Black, Latinx, Native American, and Asian

17.3%
Undergraduate Underrepresented Minorities

Domestic UUM includes Black, Latinx, and Native American

13.8%
Undergraduate International Students

17%
Undergraduate First Generation

1,000+
Courses in more than 80 areas of study

11
Varsity sports plus intramural and club sport programs

35%
Of Smith juniors study abroad in Smith programs

147
Acres make up the core of Smith's campus, designed by Olmsted, Olmsted, and Eliot.

Role of Women's Colleges Within Higher Education

Women's colleges emerged in the United States in the mid-19th century to provide women with access to higher education at a time when most institutions admitted only men. In endowing Smith College, Sophia Smith articulated a clear and ambitious purpose: "the establishment and maintenance of an institution for the higher education of young women, with the design to furnish for my own sex means and facilities for education equal to those which are afforded now in our colleges to young men." While early models of women's education were shaped by the domestic sphere—reflected at Smith in the original residential house system—the college quickly distinguished itself as a leader in advancing women's intellectual, social, and civic independence. Throughout its history, Smith has expanded access to education while maintaining a strong commitment to academic and intellectual freedom, public service, and the advancement of women's rights.

Although many women's colleges have since transitioned to co-educational models, admitting students of all genders, those that remain continue to attract students through their emphasis on academic excellence, leadership development, and strong community life. Today, Smith remains one of the largest women's colleges in the United States, providing essential opportunities for women and gender minorities to pursue the education they seek and deserve in an environment that not only supports their identities but actively affirms and celebrates them.









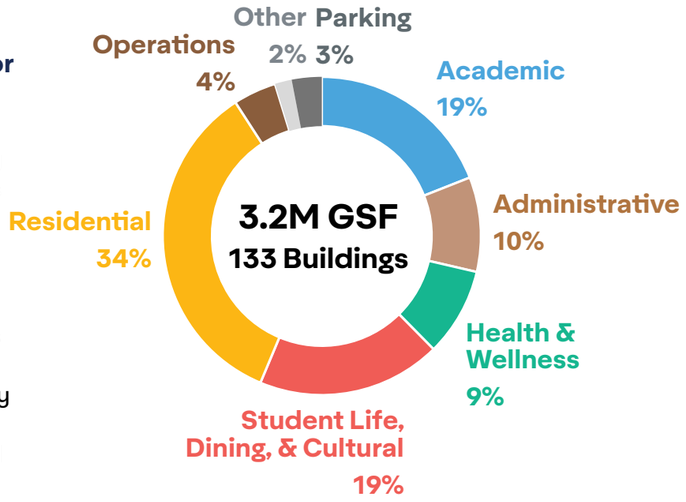




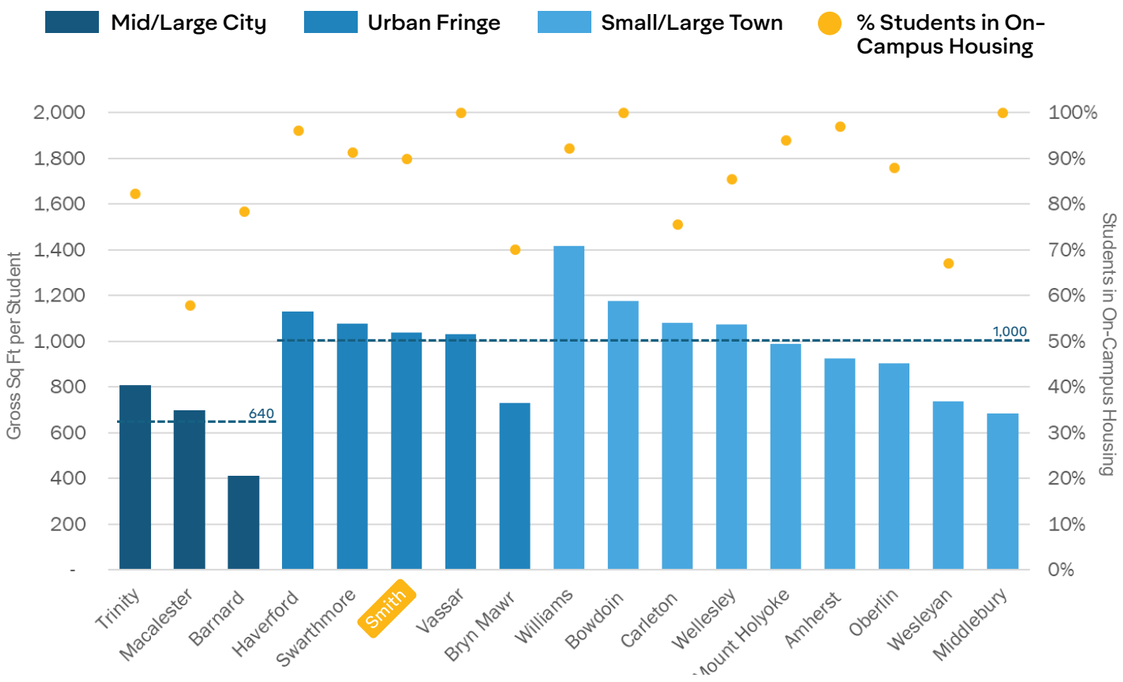
Space

Examining Smith's current space with comparable metrics allows for the identification of new opportunities for sites across campus.

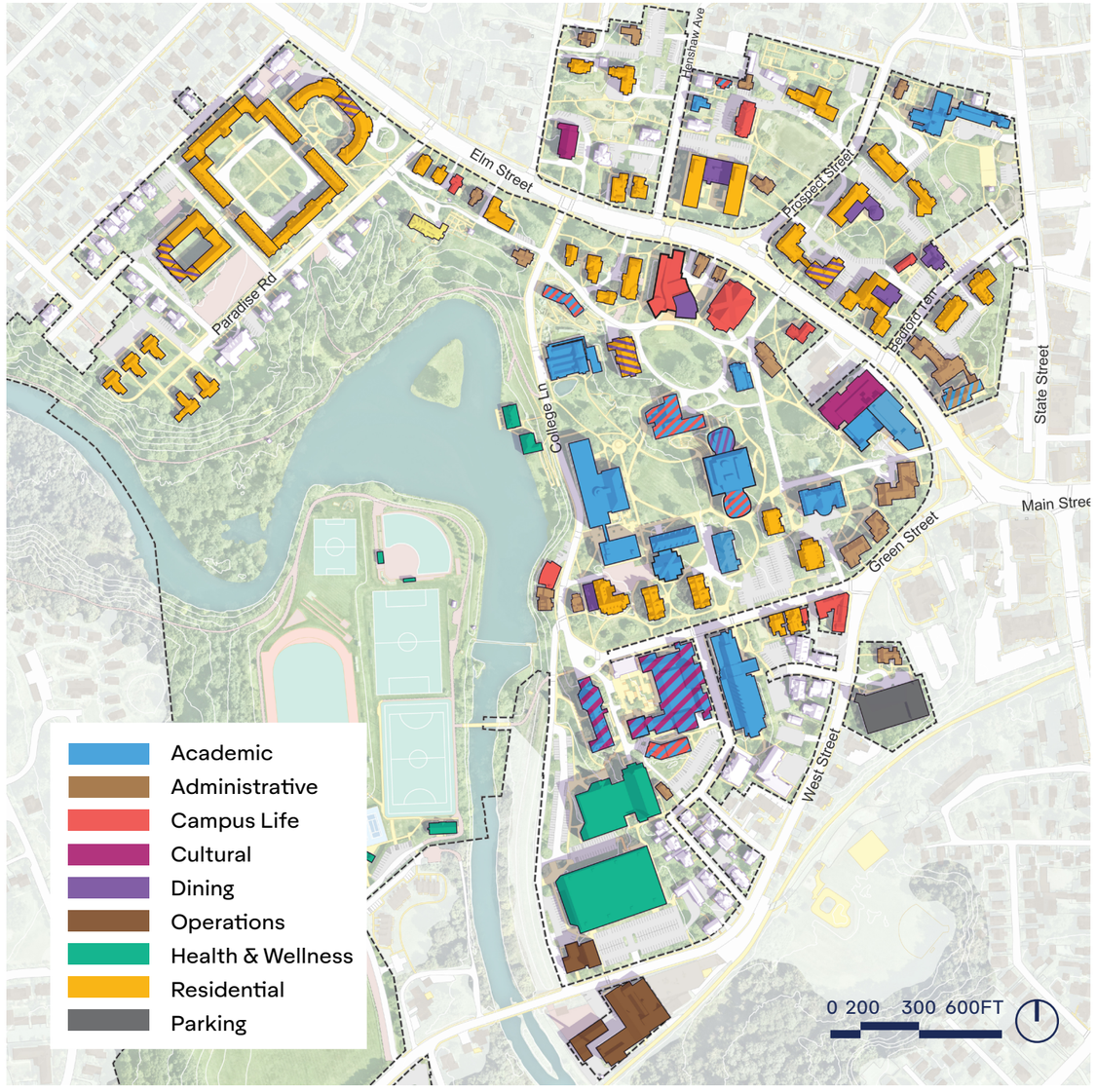
Smith's campus comprises approximately 3.2 million gross square feet (GSF) across 133 buildings, translating to roughly 1.64 million usable square feet (USF). Of this total, approximately 34% is dedicated to housing, 29% to academic and administrative space, and 28% to campus life and athletics. Smith's campus square footage per student is estimated a roughly 1,000 GSF per student, a figure that aligns with peer institutions in similar residential and academic settings.



Peer Comparison ***(GSF per Student)***



Existing Campus Building Uses



See Volume 2: Appendix for additional Space Analysis Materials.

Housing

Residential life at Smith is shaped by the college's distinctive house system, with houses ranging from 10 to 100 students. Historically, each house functioned as a fully self-contained community—students lived, ate, studied, and socialized under one roof, and daily life was organized around the house as a primary social center.

Over time, the purpose and use of these houses have evolved. Many have been adapted to meet contemporary needs and enrollment pressures, often by removing dining rooms and converting common areas into student rooms to increase bed capacity. While these changes have improved housing capacity, the historic architecture of the houses how students experience house life has shifted—reducing shared spaces and, in some cases, weakening the social and community functions that define the house system.

Dining

Smith's dining system grew out of the college's original house-based dining model, in which students ate in their own residential communities. Over time, as the functions of the houses evolved and some dining facilities were removed, dining became spread across multiple locations on campus. While this distributed model is often cited as a distinctive and appealing feature for prospective students, it also brings social, environmental, and operational complexities that require careful consideration and intentional planning.

Academics

Most academic spaces at Smith have not drastically changed over the last century, other than necessary technology and operations updates. The type of spaces available on campus for teaching and learning were not constructed with today's pedagogy in mind, and learning needs and modes have changed over the course of time.











Planning Priorities

Through broad engagement and a rigorous synthesis of place, people, and space analyses—along with integration of earlier planning studies and alignment with Compass 2035 goals—a wide range of ideas were distilled into a focused set of Campus Use Plan priorities. These priorities rose above others because they directly address the most persistent barriers to connectivity, daily experience, and academic excellence surfaced in community feedback. The need to refresh and reimagine the residential houses, expand third spaces, and integrate athletics, recreation, and wellness reflects the community's call for a more cohesive and inclusive 21st-century campus environment. Likewise, accessibility improvements and designing for more active use of the landscape emerged as essential to supporting movement, belonging, and the college's continued commitment to sustainability.

Together, these priorities form the backbone of the CUP's Big Ideas—a more connected campus, an elevated campus experience, and a stronger relationship between built and natural systems. By reinforcing campus pathways and adjacencies, improving academic and social spaces, and activating the landscape as a shared asset, the plan strengthens connections across neighborhoods and supports needs for students, faculty, and staff.



- Update Teaching and Learning Spaces
- Improve Synergies Across Departments and Centers
- Enhance Sustainable and Community-Based Dining
- Refresh and Reimagine Houses
- Develop More Third Spaces
- Integrate Athletics, Recreation, and Wellness
- Make Accessibility Updates Across Campus
- Design Active and Passive Landscapes

03

Vision

Guiding Principles, Objectives, and Goals

The CUP is rooted in the four goals of Compass 2035 and guided by seven guiding principles, each paired with a clear objective and a set of supporting goals. Together, these principles articulate the core values intended to inform decisions about campus development, capital projects, and long-term investments. The objectives define the intended outcomes of each principle, while the associated goals provide direction for how these outcomes can be advanced through the future planning, design, and development of the campus. Recognizing the evolving needs of the institution, the principles and goals are designed to be flexible, enabling decision-makers to respond to changing priorities, emerging challenges, and future opportunities while maintaining alignment with the college's long-term vision.

COMPASS 2035



1. Academic Exploration

Introduce greater flexibility into campus curricular and co-curricular spaces, encourage collaboration & exploration, and align with Strategic Plan goals.

- Provide spaces across academic units that foster collaboration, including experimental studios where ideas can be tested.
- Create interior and exterior opportunities to joyfully explore across disciplines.
- Rethink programming policies to encourage the most effective and productive use of space.
- Update and expand the concept of research space, adding shared studios, labs, and makerspaces to be shared among students, faculty, and staff.
- Expand the number and distribution of modern, tech-enabled flat floor classrooms.
- Showcase programs that embrace discovery and innovation, such as Design Thinking Initiative and Conway Center.

2. Uniqueness

Celebrate those things that are uniquely Smith.

- Bolster the house system by creating a multi-year plan to renovate existing residences, while looking for opportunities for more social and community-building spaces within the houses.
- Create academic clusters and hubs through strategic adjacencies that strengthen the open curriculum.
- Respond to the strong Olmstedian vision of place, creating a balance between active and passive landscapes.
- Center the campus around the river, enhancing this special Smith feature.
- Empower students and organizations through the increased provision of third spaces.



3. Balance Old & New

Strike a balance between the rich legacy of Smith and changes required to meet evolving needs.

- Honor existing rituals while embracing new ones, rethinking programming of existing and new spaces to support changing traditions.
- Continue to foster sustainability and innovation with buildings designed in the contemporary architectural language, while also respecting the rich legacy of Smith's architecture.
- Update and refresh historic buildings to accommodate evolving programmatic needs and tastes.
- Extend the existing Olmstedian landscape to make new connections across Green Street.

4. Agency

Give people more choice and flexibility in when, where, and how they use campus space.

- Revisit outdated academic and administrative policies to enable greater shared use of interior and exterior space.
- Make necessary accessibility and safety updates to adapt spaces for more varied community use.
- Prioritize space and policy adjustments to support student events and a healthy social life.
- Increase space flexibility by providing suitable furniture, technology, access, and support.





5. Community

Foster a sense of belonging by ensuring all community members feel supported, connected, and empowered in their growth.

- Enhance the quality of Smith's houses with expanded options for gathering through the provision of third spaces.
- Equitably develop inclusive community-building opportunities to bridge both spatial and departmental divisions.
- Enhance the dining model to prioritizes community connections and shared experiences.
- Make accessibility updates throughout campus to ensure that spaces are inclusive and equitable.
- Address requests for varied spaces and programming to welcome an increasingly diverse community.
-



6. Connectivity

Enable a better connected Smith — socially, technologically, and physically.

- Optimize Smith's mobility network and wayfinding system.
- Improve accessibility, focusing on updates to pathways and building entries.
- Integrate technology to improve connectivity across the Smith community and the world.
- Encourage collaboration and community through shared spaces and resources.



7. Stewardship

Maintain and enhance the Smith legacy of people and place.

- Promote long-term capital planning that looks to maximize campus facilities and resources, strengthening financial and environmental stewardship for the college.
- Continue strong environmental leadership, improving energy efficiency and resiliency across campus buildings and landscapes.
- Encourage student enrollment, faculty and staff retention, and alum participation by making the campus a place that is inclusive, welcoming, and adaptive to emerging needs.
- Prioritize repair and renewal and adaptive reuse over new construction.
- Consider sustainability in capital investment decision-making, including the cost of carbon and embedded carbon.



Orienting the Big Ideas

While the Guiding Principles articulate what matters most to the Smith community and provide a consistent lens for evaluating future investments across buildings, landscapes, mobility, and infrastructure, the **Big Ideas** build on this foundation. They represent the strategic actions, planning moves, and spatial strategies that bring the Guiding Principles to life—aligning institutional priorities with specific opportunities across the campus. Together, the Guiding Principles and Big Ideas connect vision to action, ensuring that future planning decisions are both community-informed and purpose-driven.



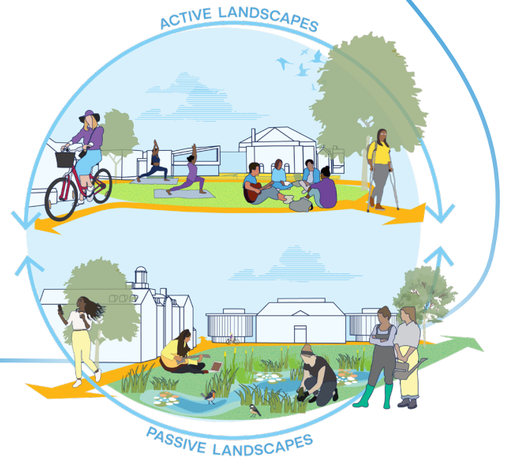


Big Ideas

Seven Big Ideas express the distinctive qualities of the Smith campus and respond to both current conditions and anticipated future needs. Each Big Idea encompasses a range of potential projects at multiple scales—from targeted interventions to larger capital initiatives—allowing recommendations to be implemented incrementally over time. Collectively, the Big Ideas provide a cohesive framework for coordinating investments, guiding design decisions, and advancing a shared vision for the campus's long-term evolution.



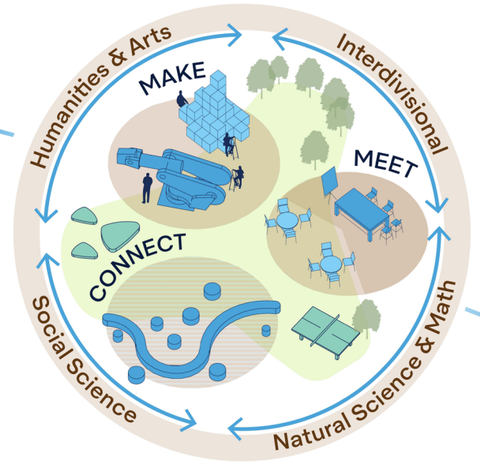
1. Center the River



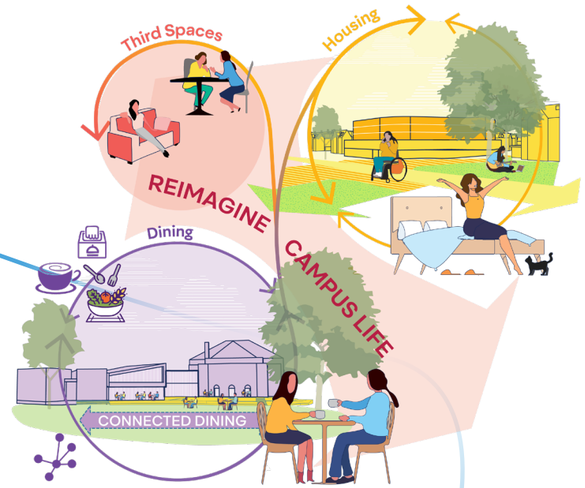
2. Balance Active & Passive Landscapes



3. Stitch Together an Accessible Open Space Network



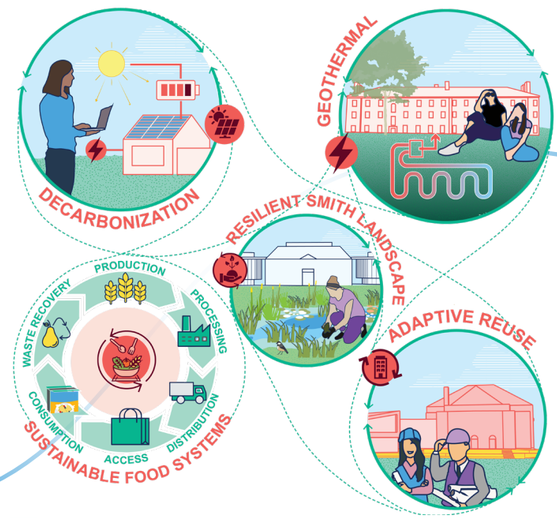
4. Strengthen Academic & Administrative Communities



5. Build Community Through Campus Life



6. Create Connections Between Campus and City



7. Embed Sustainability in All Campus Systems

1. Center the River

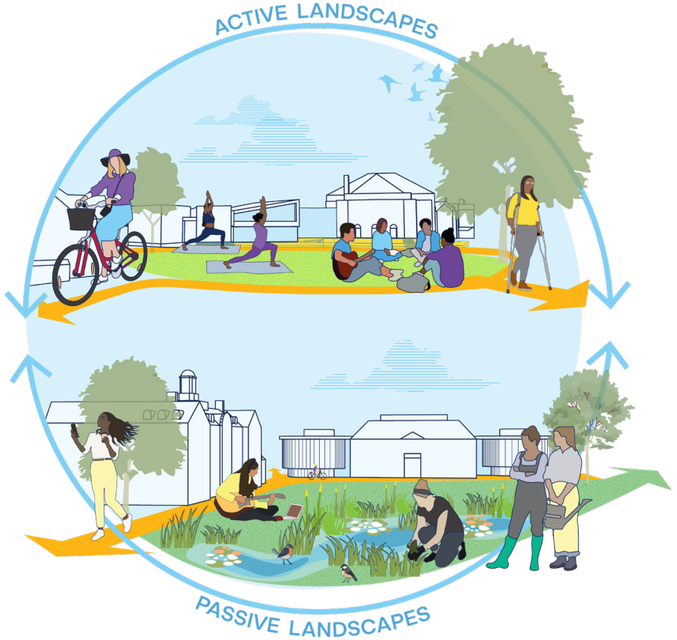
Center the River recognizes the Mill River as a defining ecological, cultural, and spatial asset of the Smith campus. This Big Idea seeks to strengthen the river's role as an organizing spine for campus life by enhancing access, visibility, and stewardship while reinforcing its ecological function. Strategies focus on improving connections to the river's edge, restoring riparian landscapes, and integrating the river more fully into academic, residential, and social experiences. By centering the river in campus planning and decision-making, Smith can advance resilience, deepen relationships between people and place, and reinforce the river as a shared commons that supports learning, wellness, and environmental responsibility.





2. Balance Active and Passive Landscapes

Balance Active and Passive Landscapes advances an intentional approach to how Smith's open spaces are used, programmed, and experienced, building on the Olmstedian legacy of a park-like campus while responding to contemporary needs for wellness, learning, and community life. This Big Idea calls for recalibrating landscapes across campus to support a spectrum of activity—from quiet reflection and ecological restoration to social gathering, outdoor learning, recreation, and performance. Strategies include activating underutilized lawns and circulation-adjacent spaces, protecting treasured passive landscapes, and integrating climate-resilient design through shade, biodiversity, and stormwater management. By thoughtfully aligning landscape character with location and use, Smith can foster well-being, support traditions old and new, and ensure that outdoor spaces contribute meaningfully to daily campus life.





3. Stitch Together an Accessible Open Space Network

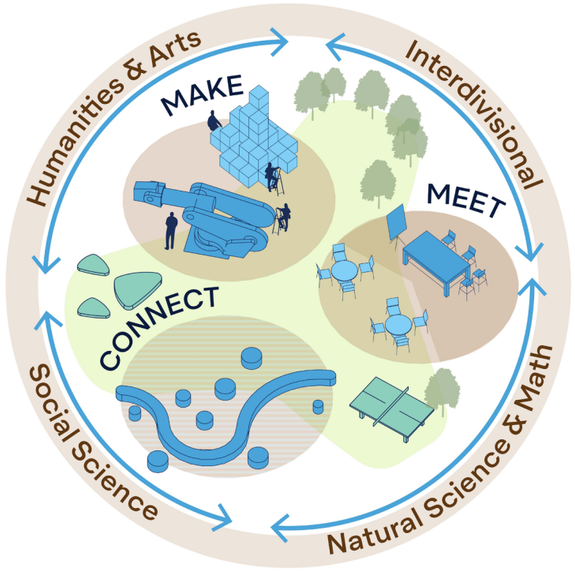
Stitch Together an Accessible Open Space Network focuses on transforming Smith's extensive but fragmented system of paths, lawns, gardens, and riverfront spaces into a cohesive, legible, and inclusive public realm. Responding to engagement feedback and accessibility assessments, this Big Idea prioritizes closing gaps in accessible routes, clarifying path hierarchies, improving crossings at Green Street and Elm Street, and strengthening connections between key destinations. The result is a campus landscape that is easier to navigate, safer to move through, and welcoming to all users regardless of ability. By integrating accessibility, wayfinding, and landscape improvements, Smith reinforces equity and belonging as foundational design principles while supporting everyday movement, orientation, and social interaction across campus.





4. Strengthen Academic and Administrative Communities

Strengthen Academic and Administrative Communities responds to the need for spaces that better support collaboration, belonging, and contemporary modes of teaching, research, and work. This Big Idea emphasizes renewing and adapting existing buildings to align space types with evolving academic and administrative needs—addressing aging facilities, fragmented locations, and limited community and meeting spaces. Strategies include creating academic hubs, divisional lounges, and collaboration zones, improving adjacencies among related departments and services, and introducing flexible, shared spaces that support both focused work and informal interaction. By investing in adaptive reuse, clearer policies about using and reserving space, and more welcoming environments, Smith can strengthen intellectual community, improve operational efficiency, and reinforce the campus as a place of connection and shared purpose.





5. Build Community Through Campus Life

Build Community Through Campus Life centers on strengthening the social, cultural, and communal heart of Smith by expanding and diversifying spaces where the community comes together beyond classrooms and residences. This Big Idea addresses the need for more third spaces—places for gathering, dining, events, and informal interaction—while supporting traditions that are central to Smith's identity. Key strategies include rethinking the Julia McWilliams Child '34 Campus Center and John M. Greene Hall as a vibrant campus hub, introducing a more flexible and inclusive dining network, improving accessibility to cultural and event spaces, and activating both indoor and outdoor settings for daily use. Together, these moves foster belonging, encourage cross-campus interaction, and reinforce campus life as a core dimension of the Smith experience.



6. Create Connections Between Campus and City

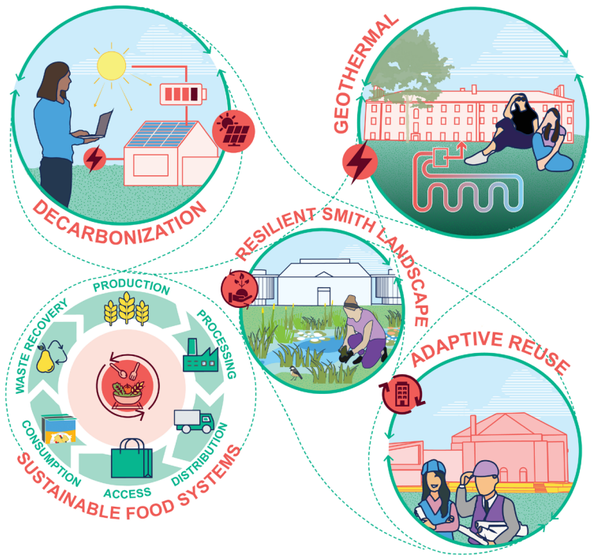
Create Connections Between Campus and City positions the campus edge—particularly along Green Street, Elm Street, and key gateways—as an opportunity to strengthen relationships between Smith College and the city of Northampton. This Big Idea envisions clearer, more welcoming thresholds that support shared use, visibility, and engagement while respecting Smith's campus identity. Strategies include reimagining Green Street as a shared street and discovery corridor, enhancing gateways and wayfinding, introducing mixed-use and community-facing programs, and improving pedestrian safety and accessibility. By creating spaces that invite interaction between campus and city, Smith reinforces its role as an active civic partner and ensures that campus investments contribute positively to the broader urban fabric.





7. Embed Sustainability in All Campus Systems

Embed Sustainability in All Campus Systems integrates a holistic framework linking physical stewardship, operational practices, and Smith's educational mission. Through the 4Ps — *Place, Practice, Pathways, and Purpose* — this Big Idea emphasizes the interconnected systems of campus. By designing and restoring buildings and infrastructure as an integrated ecological system, Smith advances decarbonization, resilience, and biodiversity while honoring its historic setting. This approach aligns institutional decision-making and daily practices with discovery-based learning pathways for students, faculty, and staff. Ultimately, the campus serves as a living laboratory for climate and environmental leadership, sharing knowledge and scaling solutions to contribute to a more just and sustainable world.





PLACE

How we steward the Smith campus



PRACTICE

How we do the work, every day

PATHWAYS

How we learn, teach, and engage



PURPOSE

How we lead on campus and beyond



Planning Strategy

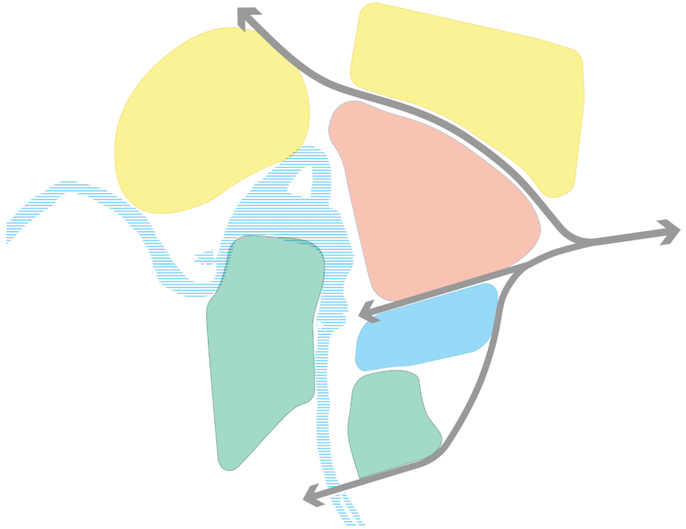
A Connected Campus

Through the Campus Use Plan process, a clear vision has emerged: a campus that is more connected—physically, socially, and intellectually. The strategy developed weaves together the distinct zones of the campus, extending the core and softening boundaries to foster connection across neighborhoods.

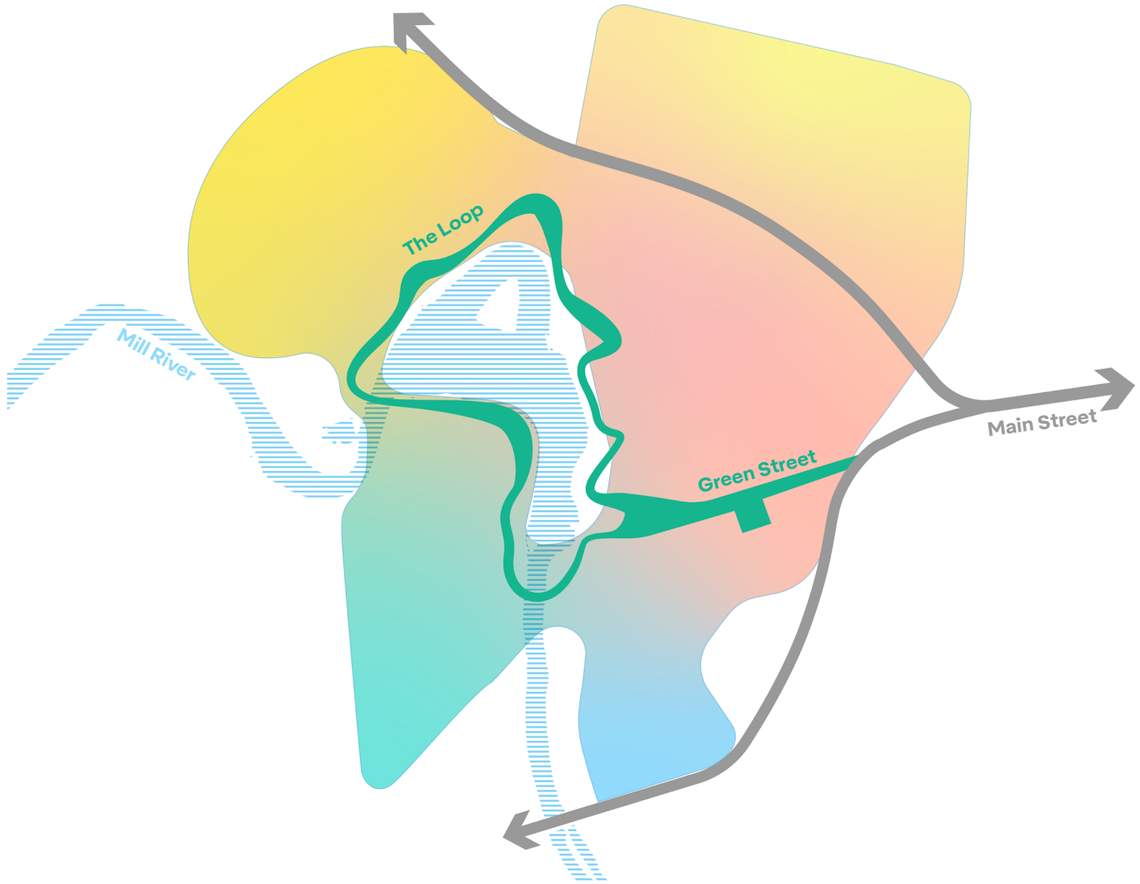
Each Big Idea reinforces the concept of a Connected Campus - creating linkages across space, community, and systems - and strengthens the sense of belonging that defines the Smith experience.

A continuous, accessible campus loop around Paradise Pond and the Mill River strengthens connections between academic, residential, wellness, and recreational areas, reinforcing the river as a shared commons and organizing framework for movement, reflection, and community life. Green Street—once a dividing line—becomes a central corridor of discovery and creativity, linking people and ideas across disciplines and experiences.

Existing District Zones



Proposed Connected Campus



A Vision for 2056

Discover everywhere. Lead anywhere. Belong here.

The CUP affirms Smith College's commitment to a 21st-century model of residential liberal arts education that is rooted in sustainability, community, and academic excellence. The vision prioritizes reinvestment in existing buildings through thoughtful renovation and adaptive reuse, and spatial adjacencies are carefully considered to prioritize the equitable distribution of resources.

Following principles of sustainability and stewardship, construction is limited to strategic opportunities that advance academic, residential, and campus life. By leveraging its park-like landscape shaped by the Mill River and improving the public realm across campus, these changes will serve to enhance the campus experience and deepen connections to the city of Northampton. This vision will enable Smith to advance a distinct campus experience centered on discovery, leadership, and belonging.

This vision charts a bold yet achievable path from today's campus to a transformed Smith in 2056—advancing Compass 2035 through coordinated, incremental investments that compound over time. By pairing long-term ambition with near-term action, the CUP turns aspiration into an implementable roadmap for Smith's future.



04

Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods

Four Smith neighborhoods have been identified in planning discussions. Each neighborhood is defined by a distinct geographic area with its own identity, mix of uses, and role and function within the overall campus structure. The four neighborhoods are: the Campus Core, North of Elm, the Quad, and Wellness and Recreation.

THE QUAD

PARADISE ROAD

PARADISE POND

NORTH OF ELM

ROUND HILL ROAD

CAMPUS CORE

COLLEGE LANE

WELLNESS AND RECREATION

MILL RIVER

HENSHAW AVENUE

GREEN STREET

ELM STREET

WEST STREET

STATE STREET

GRECOURT GATES

N

N

Campus Core

The Campus Core is the historic and academic heart of Smith, defined by its iconic Olmsted landscape, human scale, and concentration of academic, administrative, and community-oriented spaces. As the most active and interconnected part of campus, it brings together intellectual life and shared traditions, offering a setting where learning, collaboration, and campus identity converge.









Campus Core

Vision

The Campus Core is extended with the reimagined Green Street serving as a pedestrian-friendly connector. Administrative functions are strengthened through reinforced clusters of activity and core academic buildings are renewed to support modern teaching needs. New community dining spaces and transformed event spaces reinforce the core as the vibrant heart of the Smith campus.

Building Uses

Academic, administrative, campus life, and residential buildings are all located within the Campus Core and create a rich, integrated campus experience.



Campus Core

Proposed Development

The plan calls for reimagining underutilized spaces in the campus core through targeted renovations, upgrades to aging buildings and infrastructure, and selective new construction—primarily along Green Street—to establish a Discovery Corridor and create opportunities for Smith to explore new commercial partnerships.

Landscape and Mobility

Olmsted's original campus landscape design organizes the Campus Core, with a web of pathways connecting defined green open spaces that balance a mix of active and passive uses. Improvements to the network of pedestrian paths ensure accessible connectivity. The proposed landscape updates create a new campus spine along Green Street, and a Gateway plaza welcomes visitors and encourages connections to downtown.



The Quad

The Quad is an almost exclusively residential neighborhood of campus, characterized by its classic New England architecture, views of Paradise Pond, and adjacent access to the Mill River Trail and the woods. This neighborhood is home to over one-third of Smith College students, drawing its name from its central architectural feature—the Quadrangle created by the six central houses built in 1936.









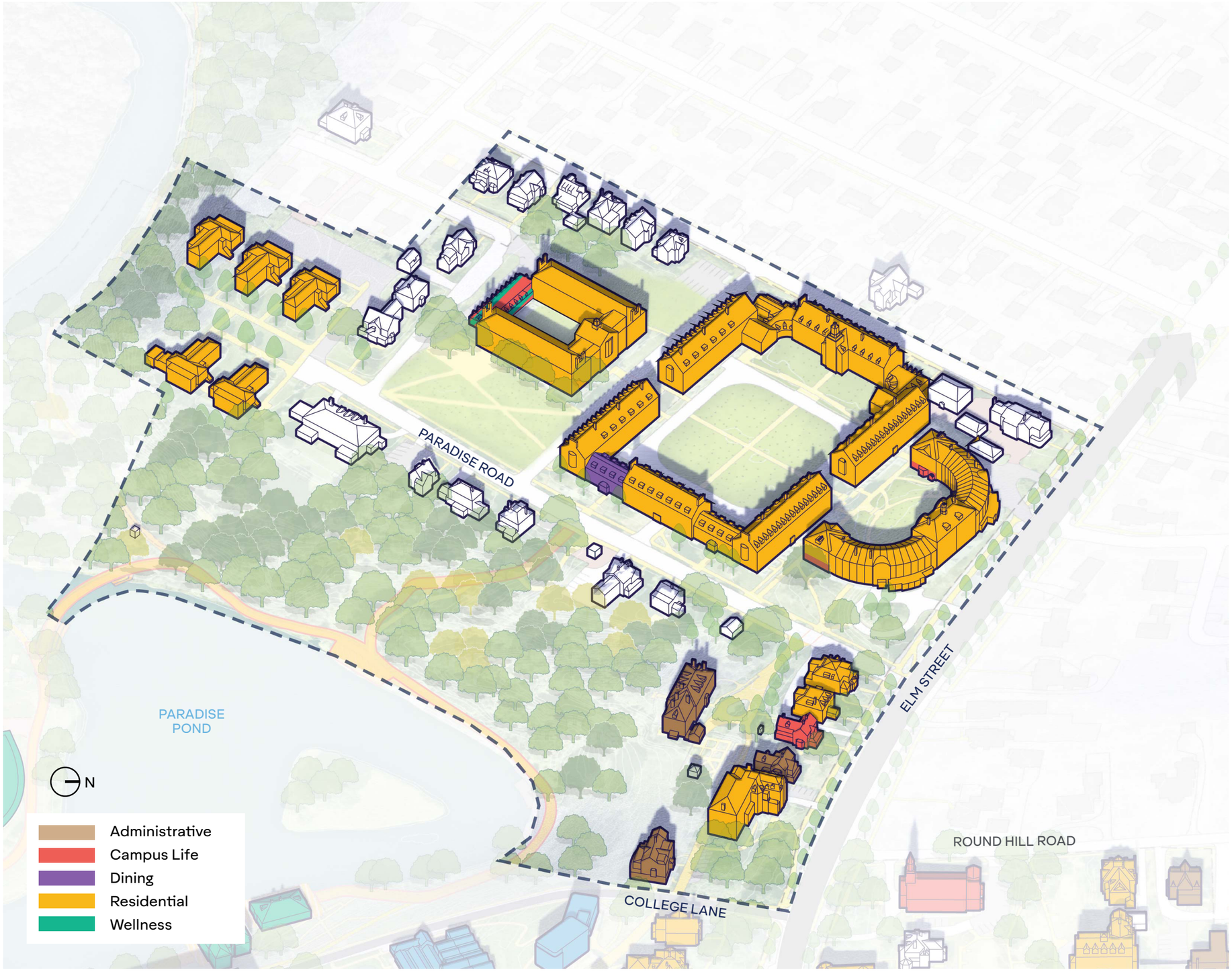
The Quad

Vision

The Quad houses nearly 1,000 students in 15 residential communities. It has the largest concentration of student beds in a single neighborhood. The CUP calls for enhancements to the neighborhood residential experience through added third spaces, such as a wellness or food hub, renewed houses, and improved connections to the riverfront and recreation resources.

Building Uses

The Quad is the only Smith neighborhood made up almost entirely of residences, and includes the college's only apartment-style independent living option, the Friedmans. In addition to ongoing house refreshes and refurbishing to support communities at the house scale, the CUP looks to repurpose dining spaces and kitchens over time as the college shifts towards a community dining model. These spaces will be reprogrammed to meet student needs, providing a range of resources—such as wellness and recreation, a satellite dining option, and student event spaces—in new, neighborhood-scale third spaces.



The Quad

Proposed Development

No new building development is proposed within the Quad neighborhood. Instead, recommendations prioritize refurbishing and restoring house common spaces and repurposing underutilized spaces. Targeted investments in former large-scale house dining spaces and kitchens are proposed over time to distribute campus resources at the neighborhood scale. These changes, along with focused landscape enhancements, enrich daily life and strengthen the character of the neighborhood.

Landscape and Mobility

A proposed accessible pathway around Paradise Pond is a key CUP landscape and mobility recommendations. The planned trail from Paradise Road to the river, currently under construction, and proposed pedestrian bridge will create new connectivity between this neighborhood and Wellness and Recreation. Landscape improvements such as the Comstock terrace are underway to ensure the neighborhood supports a range of active and passive landscape uses.



North of Elm

Smith's campus North of Elm primarily consists of residences and offices, but also includes vital campus life resources such as the Design Thinking Initiative, the Center for Religious and Spiritual Life, the Mwangi Cultural Center, the Alumnae House, and more. This neighborhood serves as the interface between the college's campus and Northampton, blending with local building typologies nearing the heart of downtown to create an undefined campus edge.









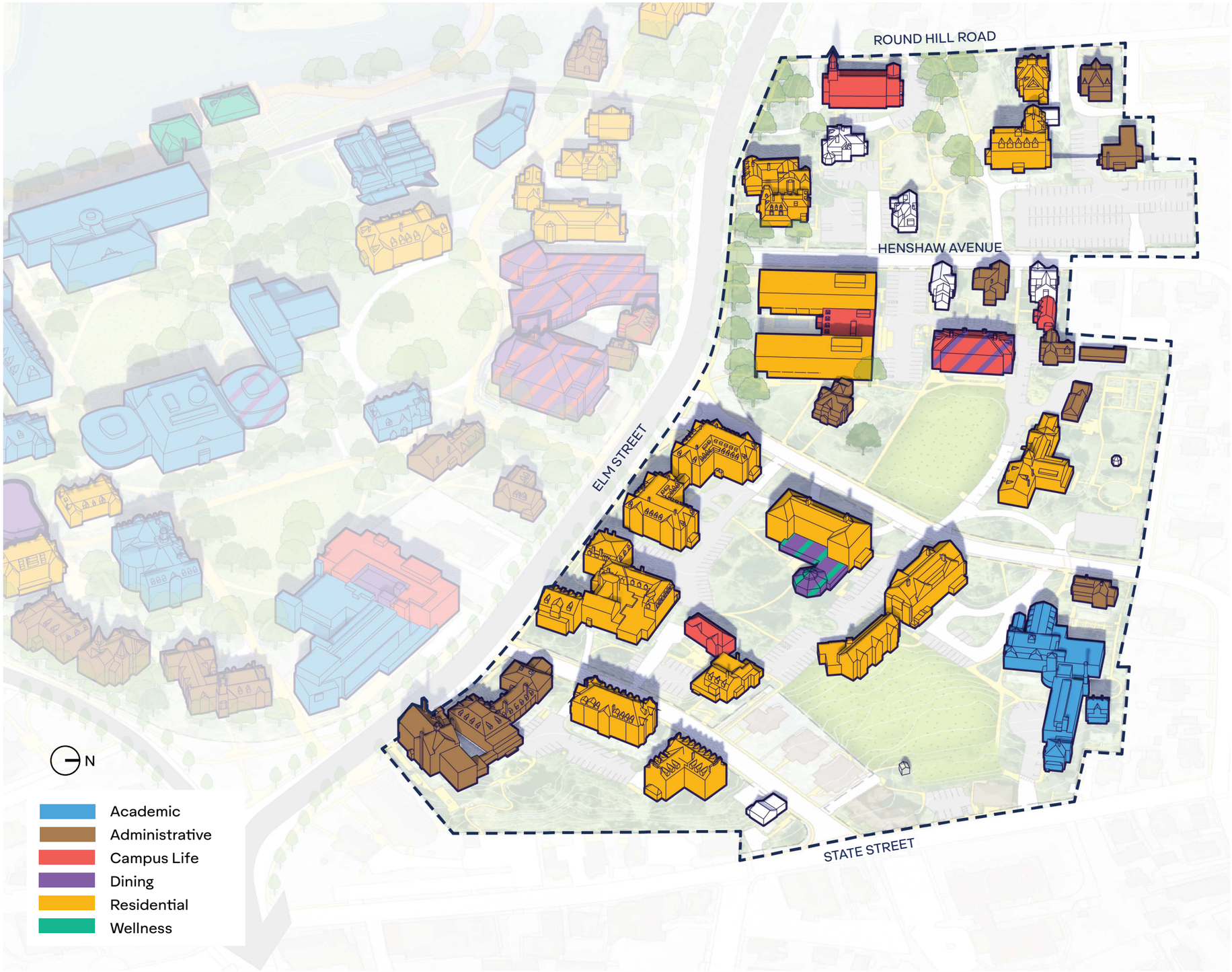
North of Elm

Vision

The North of Elm neighborhood will benefit from targeted updates to underutilized spaces alongside ongoing house refreshes. The reprogramming of these spaces will support student life and strengthen the neighborhood by expanding access to campus resources.

Building Uses

North of Elm has a mixture of Smith houses, several campus life functions, and a cluster of administrative offices that support outreach units. The CUP recommendations concentrate on updates to the Davis Center to create an active hub for student organizations and activities taking place on the recently relandscaped Davis Meadow. As changes take place in the greater campus dining network, a satellite dining location is considered in Davis as well. The space in Lamont Dining Room is similarly reprogrammed to serve as a neighborhood wellness resource, and updates to house interiors support campus life at the residential scale.



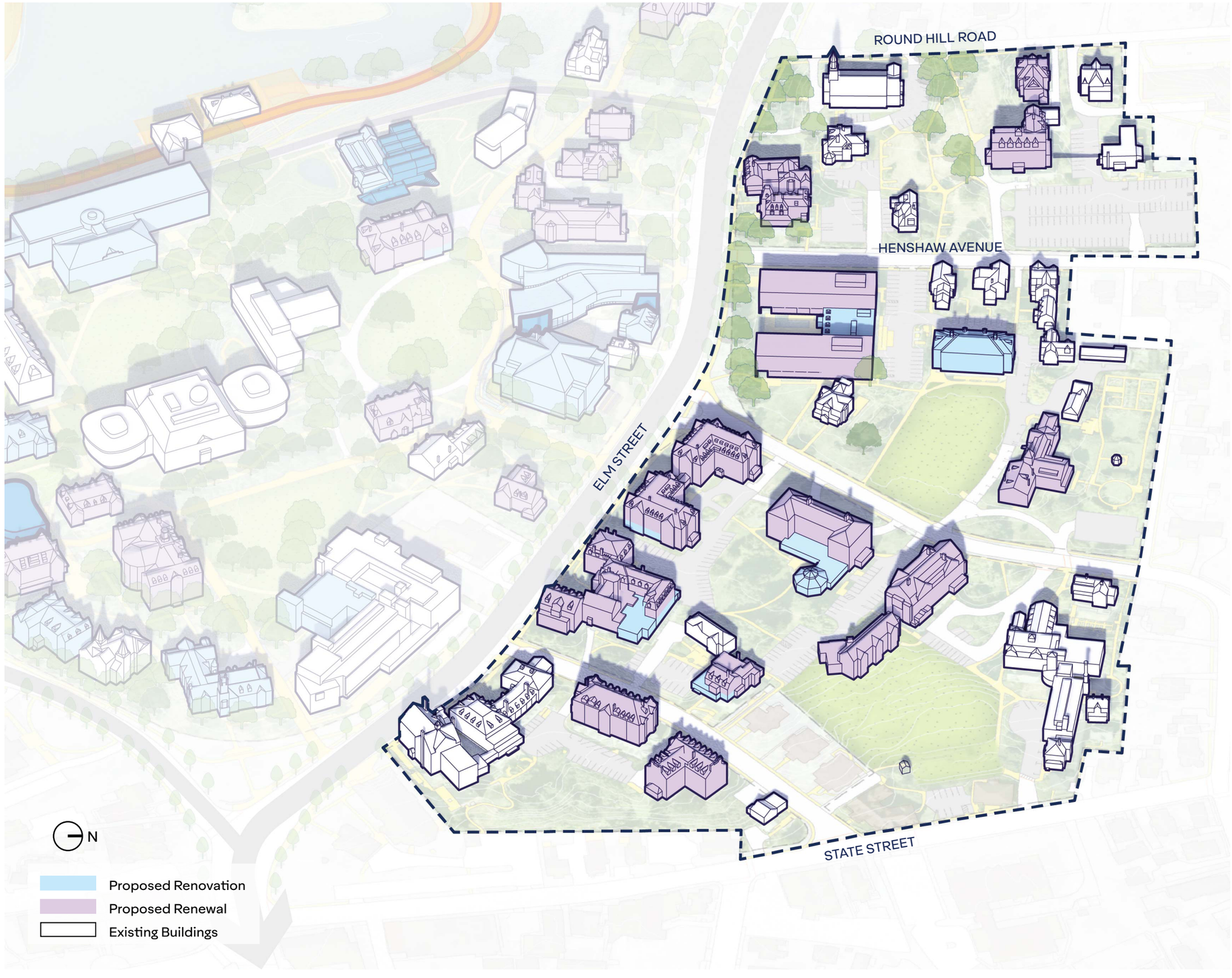
North of Elm

Proposed Development

The CUP recommendations for the North of Elm neighborhood focus on updates to existing houses and a transformative reimagining of the Davis Center as both a campus and neighborhood destination. As the Smith dining network evolves, smaller-scale neighborhood dining spaces and kitchens will be returned to their respective house communities, while certain spaces with exterior access and distinct layouts will be reprogrammed for neighborhood and campus use.

Landscape and Mobility

In order to improve connections to the Campus Core from this neighborhood, enhancements to Elm Street crossings are key. Raised speed bumps and updated pathways will increase safety and the pedestrian experience. A reconfigured surface parking lot off of Henshaw Avenue is proposed to support this neighborhood and the northern section of the campus. Potential consolidation of the distributed parking areas in this neighborhood could further enhance and enlarge green spaces of this campus zone.



Wellness & Recreation

This neighborhood encompasses Smith's primary wellness and recreation resources, defined by both building and land use, and also includes Smith's energy plant and Campus Services, Maintenance, and Operations facilities. Due to a lack of connectivity across Green Street and West Street, as well as steep grade changes that limit accessibility, this neighborhood can at times feel disconnected from the rest of campus. The athletics fields, Hospital Hill, and the Mill River are focal points of the neighborhood, which also serves as a connector to local walking and bike paths.









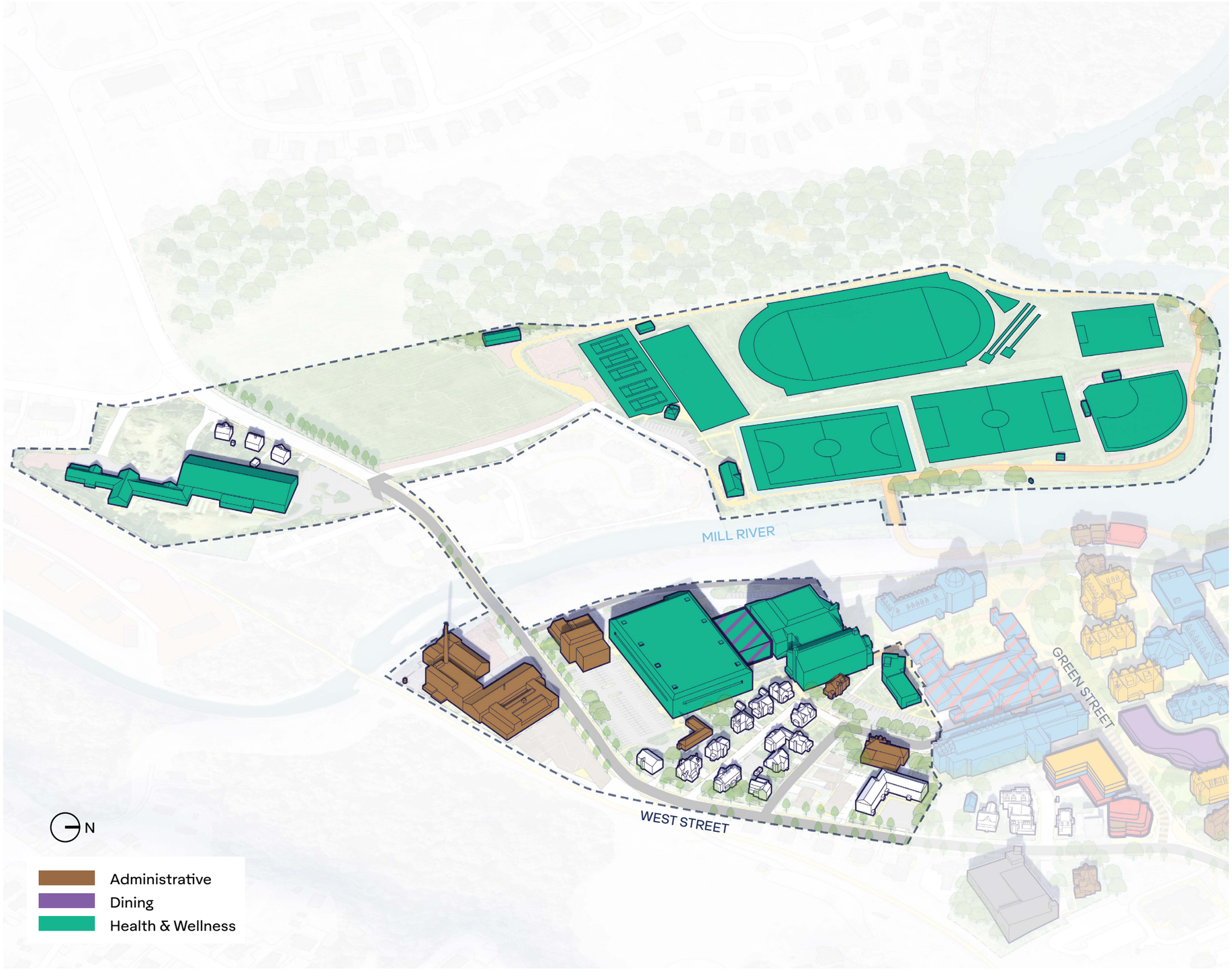
Wellness & Recreation

Vision

Enhancing wellness at Smith is central to both the *Compass 2035* and CUP recommendations. This neighborhood, which sits at the southwestern corner of the campus and along the river, is transformed through updates to the Ainsworth-Scott gymnasiums and increased connectivity to the rest of campus as a result of a reimagined Green Street and a new Mendenhall Promenade. The creation of the Loop, a pathway that bridges across the Mill River, celebrates the beauty of the waterfront, and additional pathway and crossing improvements improve community access to both indoor and outdoor recreation.

Building Uses

Campus athletics, recreation, and wellness facilities are concentrated in a hub adjacent to the Schacht Center for Health and Wellness at the heart of this neighborhood. These resources serve all members of the Smith community through recreation and education, and a recommended food hub or concession in Ainsworth-Scott ensures access to healthy food options. Campus Services, Maintenance, and Operations remain concentrated along West Street and the southern edge of campus.



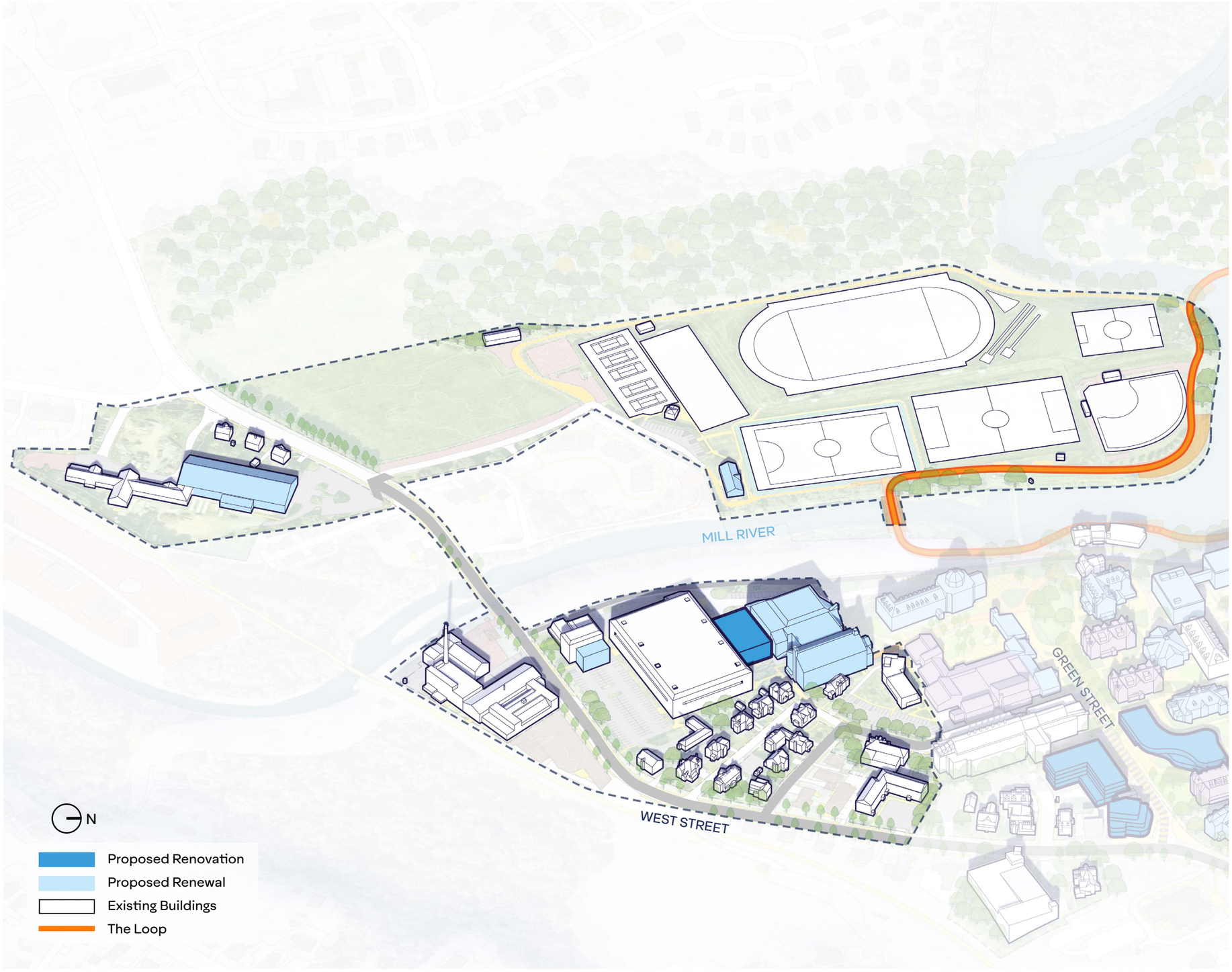
Wellness & Recreation

Proposed Development

Strategic interventions and proposed new construction will update the Wellness and Recreation Hub at Ainsworth-Scott Gymnasiums, creating an improved community resource. Landscapes are developed along the river to encourage use of the new Loop. Updates to pathways and the street crossing to the indoor practice facility prioritize accessibility and safety, improving conditions for community members traversing this neighborhood.

Landscape and Mobility

The Loop is the major landscape and mobility initiative proposed for this neighborhood, as it centers the river in the campus experience. Additional mobility enhancements include safe crossings across West Street, accessibility updates to the existing Lamont footbridge and construction of a new footbridge, as well as an updated pathway and green space—the Mendenhall Promenade—from Green Street to Ainsworth-Scott.



05

Frameworks

Frameworks

The CUP is organized around a coordinated set of frameworks that together guide the physical development of the future campus. Each framework addresses a specific system—ranging from development, campus use, and academics to administrative functions, campus life, house life, and wellness and recreation—and translates strategic priorities into actionable projects. Complementary frameworks focused on mobility and accessibility, landscape and public realm, and sustainability and infrastructure ensure that the campus evolves as an integrated, resilient, and student-centered environment.

Plan recommendations prioritize renovations to existing buildings—repurposing those that are underutilized and renewing those that would benefit from a general refresh—while addressing deferred maintenance and advancing decarbonization goals. Proposed new construction is intentionally limited and focused on addressing space needs in academics, housing, and campus life, with several opportunities identified for potential partnership development.

More intensive changes are proposed through a range of transformative renovations, new construction, and landscape improvements that strengthen academic life, community connection, and accessibility. Together, these projects give physical form to *Compass 2035*'s goals of discovery, leadership, and belonging through spaces that spark collaboration, creativity, and inclusion.

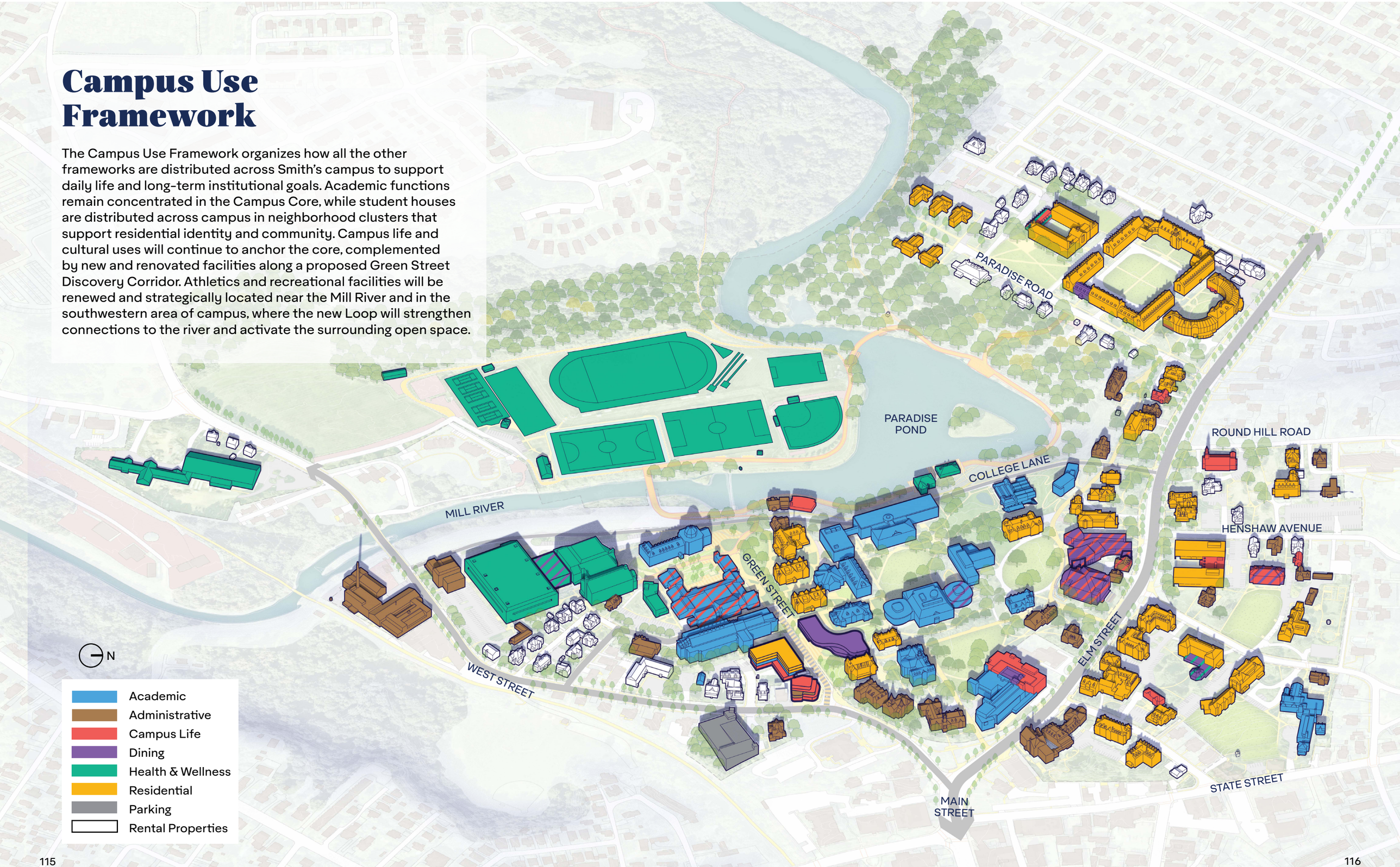
Recommendations for new construction and major renovations include the Julia Child Center and John M. Greene Hall, a new dining hub on the Dickinson Lot, mixed-use buildings along Green Street, and a reimagined Ainsworth and Scott Gymnasiums as vibrant hubs for dining, housing, wellness, and campus life. Targeted updates to the Davis Center, Young Library, Lilly Hall, and College Hall enhance student engagement and innovation, while improvements to the Science Center, Mendenhall Center for the Performing Arts, Lyman Plant House, and the Alumnae Gym strengthen teaching and the arts. Landscape and mobility projects—including the Loop, Green Street, and accessibility upgrades—will create a more connected campus and open new pathways between Smith and downtown Northampton.



Campus Use Framework

Campus Use Framework

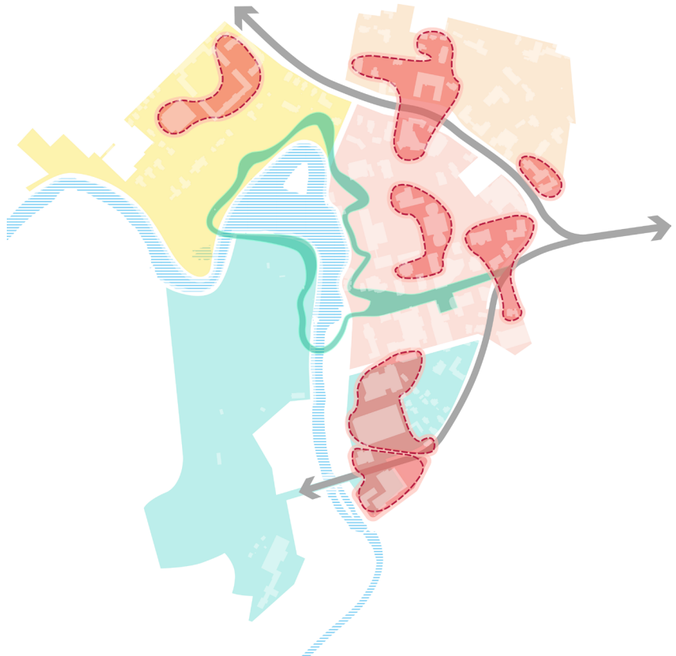
The Campus Use Framework organizes how all the other frameworks are distributed across Smith's campus to support daily life and long-term institutional goals. Academic functions remain concentrated in the Campus Core, while student houses are distributed across campus in neighborhood clusters that support residential identity and community. Campus life and cultural uses will continue to anchor the core, complemented by new and renovated facilities along a proposed Green Street Discovery Corridor. Athletics and recreational facilities will be renewed and strategically located near the Mill River and in the southwestern area of campus, where the new Loop will strengthen connections to the river and activate the surrounding open space.



Campus Use Framework

Thematic Clusters

Smith's current academic, residential, cultural, and wellness functions are dispersed in ways that can make daily navigation and community-building less intuitive. Organizing campus activities into thematic clusters creates more legible district identities while improving wayfinding, collaboration, and adjacencies.

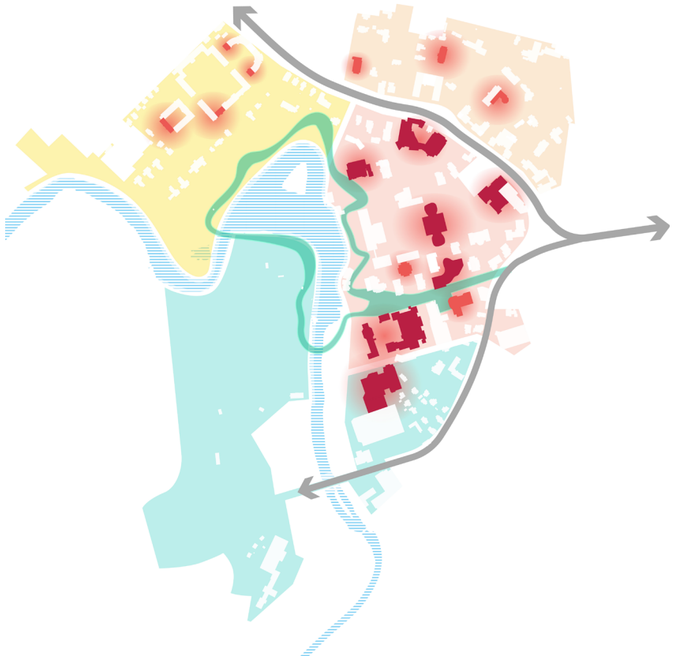


Campuswide Hubs

Engagement feedback emphasized the need for shared destinations that support the full Smith community. Campuswide hubs offer accessible resources for dining, study, and events, serving as key anchors of campus life.

Neighborhood Hubs

Neighborhood hubs complement the campuswide hubs by serving the specific needs of Smith's neighborhoods. These smaller destinations may include food, wellness, informal study and social space, or flexible rooms for house-based or departmental use. They strengthen house connections and expand access to amenities at a local level.



Academic Framework

Academic Framework

The Academic Framework looks at the comprehensive network of academic buildings that support all teaching divisions. It includes teaching space, research space, offices, support spaces, and departmental and divisional meeting and lounge areas.

Key Findings

Smith's academic life is shaped by an open curriculum but constrained by aging, fragmented facilities and mismatched learning spaces. Responses to online survey questions, space utilization analysis, tours of facilities, and numerous stakeholder listening sessions with faculty and students suggest a growing need to rethink space conditions, space types, policies, and schedules to better support contemporary teaching, research, and community-building.

Academic Strengths

The open curriculum is a major attraction for students because it offers intellectual flexibility and choice. Neilson Library stands out as a particularly successful academic hub, valued for its inviting study and collaboration spaces. Co-curricular programs are valued, however a request for greater fluidity between curricular and co-curricular spaces was a reoccurring request.



Space Analysis

Analysis of classrooms and teaching labs indicated that the configuration and utilization of available classrooms and teaching labs does not adequately meet current teaching and research needs, despite sufficient total campus space.

Classrooms and Teaching Labs

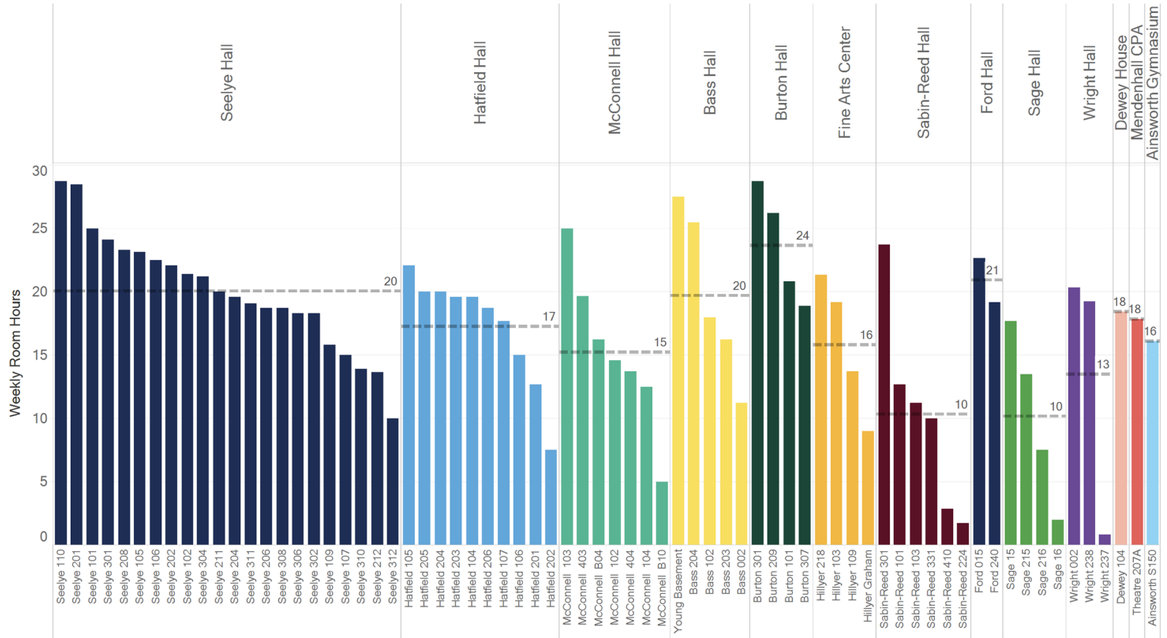
This analysis aligns with findings from the earlier Learning Spaces Study (2019), both of which highlight a demand for large, flat floor teaching spaces contrasted with an excess of small classrooms. In the MyCampus Survey, a faculty member shared that "Seelye 106 is one of only 2-3 classrooms where one can create an interactive and inclusive classroom for 50+ students. Other lecture hall-style classrooms are incompatible with today's pedagogy." This shift toward needing more mid-sized classrooms (approximately 30-40 students) was revealed in analyzing current space demands. Learning spaces overall fall below utilization targets (classroom industry standard closer to 22-24 Weekly Room Hours), constrained by the mandatory lunch hour, in particular, and existing rooms often cannot support the full range of faculty and student activities.

Classroom analysis shows that the overall supply is generally sufficient to meet demand, with slight improvements to average room use.

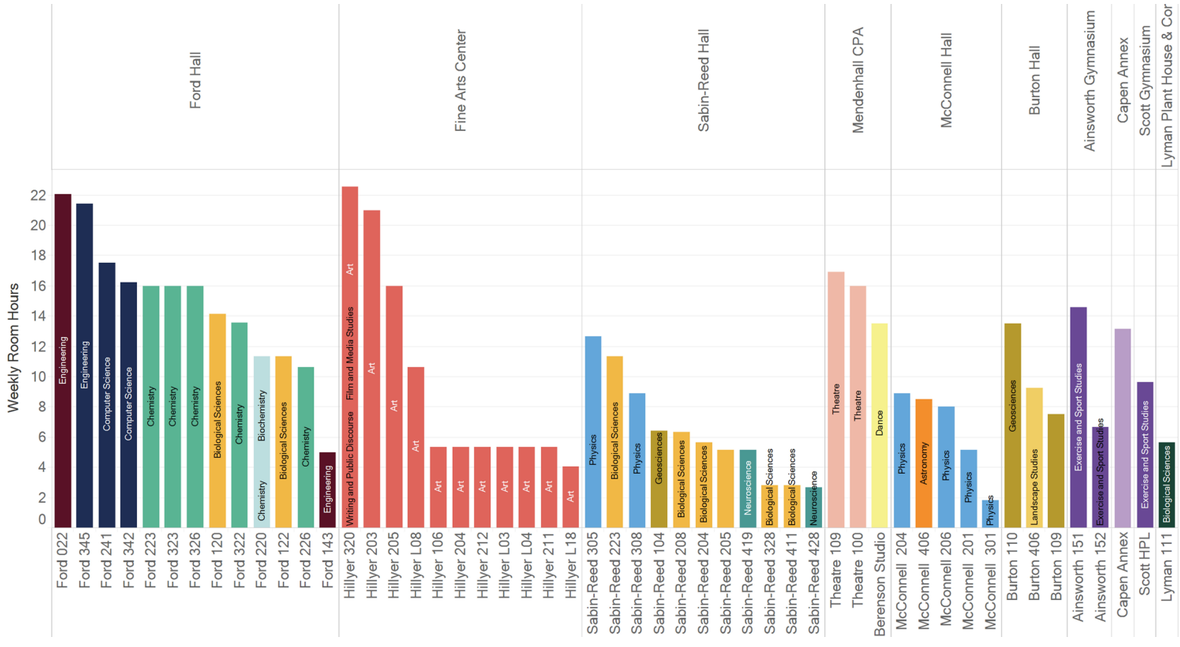
Looking at teaching labs, it is suggested that there is a continued need to explore space flexibility to accommodate a range of classes—Sabin Reed 325 was cited as an example of a teaching lab with good flexibility. In addition to this need for teaching space flexibility, the desire for non-STEM faculty labs—such as Studio Art Faculty studios and all-division experimental studios—was highlighted through campus engagement. Per analysis findings, if Smith is able to achieve higher teaching lab occupancy and weekly hour room use through strategic scheduling and repurposing, no additional teaching labs are needed.

As such, the CUP calls for updated course scheduling policies and improved utilization strategies to share and allocate both classrooms and teaching labs more effectively and equitably, including a reexamination of scheduling blocks. While the use of lunch and late afternoon periods was considered, the plan recognizes the importance of preserving key community times, while emphasizing the need for the college to remain open to using the academic day differently as space needs and culture continue to evolve.

See Volume 2: Appendix for additional Space Analysis Materials.

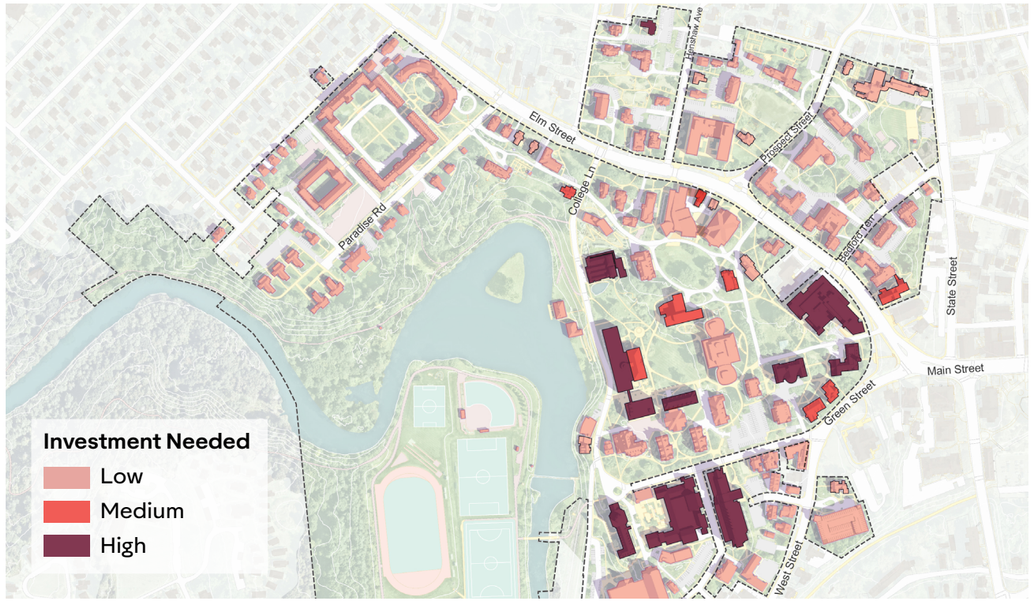


Classroom Utilization



Teaching Lab Utilization

Projected 10-Year Facility Condition Assessment Needs



Aging Facilities and Space Allocation Challenges

Academic buildings, particularly the Science Center, are constrained by outdated facilities that affect both functionality and occupant well-being. An analysis of Facilities Condition Assessment (FCA) reports indicates that many academic buildings have significant renewal needs. Programmatic and code updates, beyond renewal costs, should also be considered when evaluating academic modernization.

Evolving Learning Needs

In addition to evolving classroom needs and shifting teaching modes, a reported need to address increased student accommodations came up in listening sessions. Sensory adaptations, provision of varied teaching spaces, testing accommodation space, and breakout rooms are increasingly requested..

Community and Meeting Space

Faculty and students in the Humanities and Social Sciences have limited access to spaces that foster community, belonging, and informal exchange, in contrast to Division III, mathematics, and science groups that benefit from more structured organizational environments. Across academic workplaces, meeting space represents only a small fraction of the overall footprint, approximately 2%, reinforcing a broader perception that current facilities fall short in supporting community-building, collaboration, and evolving academic needs. Fragmented departmental locations and limited flexibility in space assignments complicate collaboration, recruitment, and strategic planning for programs.

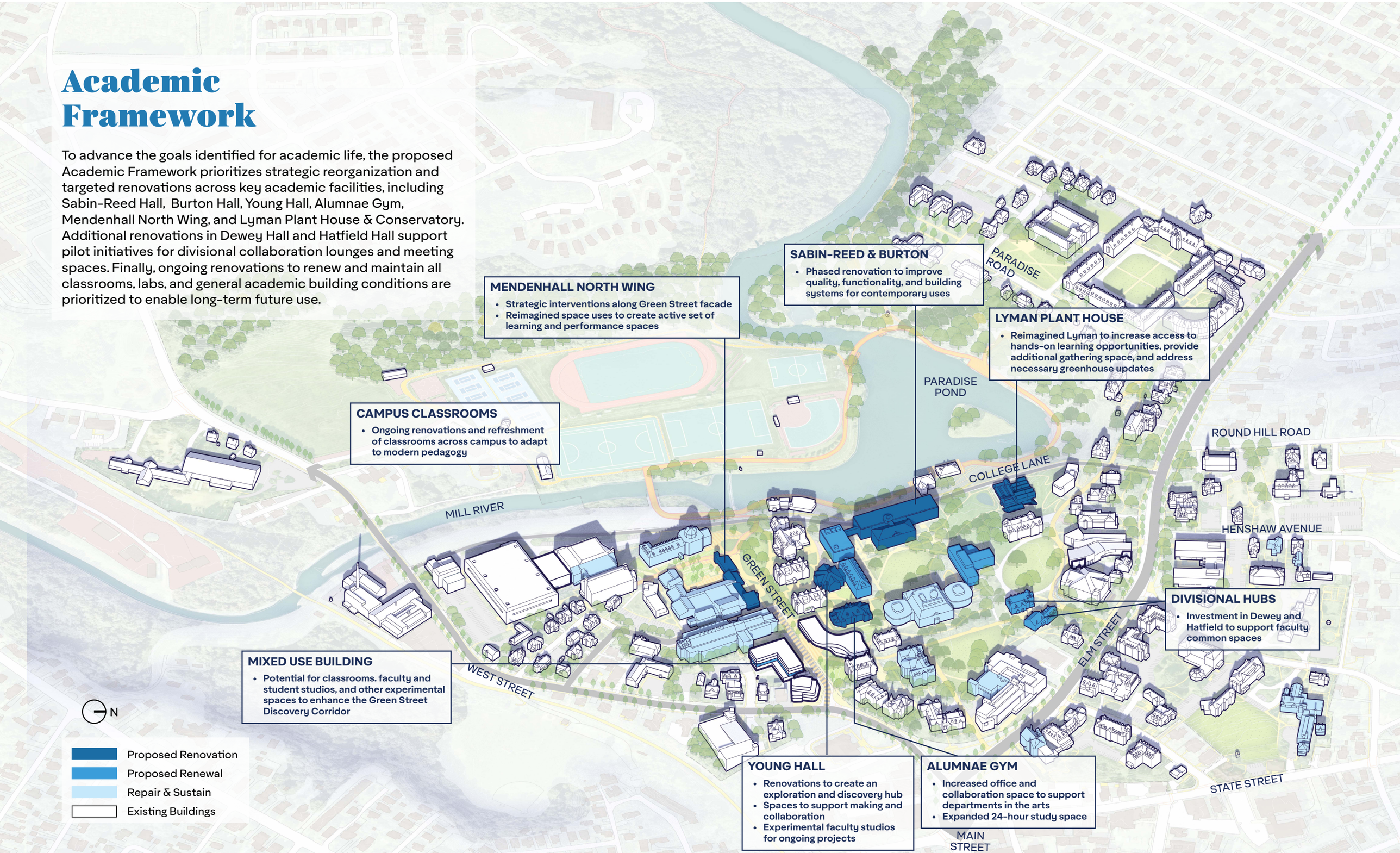
Goals

This might look like...

1. Strengthen Academic Communities Organize space to support community within and across groups and scales, both for each academic department and cross-cutting initiatives.	• Fostering community for academic groups and departments through lounges and intentional co-location. • Thoughtfully distributing centers and institutes with adjacency in mind. • Connecting academic divisions and the larger community through a Discovery Corridor along Green Street.
2. Optimize Space Use Be good stewards of a finite resource by working at the intersection of space utilization, policy, and culture to enhancing effective and efficient use of space.	• Piloting programs and strategies to enable shoulder hour teaching and increase classroom and teaching lab utilization. • Renovating and adapting existing spaces to better align supply (room size) and demand (section size).
3. Build to Adapt Revitalize space in ways that respect tradition and history while enabling better functionality and flexibility for contemporary and future uses, including increasing fluidity between curricular and co-curricular activities.	• Continuing strategic small-to-intermediate interventions and renovations. • Prioritizing the adaptive reuse of underutilized spaces.
4. Renew facilities Invest strategically in existing facilities and create long-term pathways for renewing building systems in sync with current and future programmatic uses.	• Aligning building systems and other renewal needs with programmatic improvements, including updates to technology and digital infrastructure. • Phased renovations over time of classrooms and Clarke Science Center facilities to meet needs of current and emerging pedagogies.

Academic Framework

To advance the goals identified for academic life, the proposed Academic Framework prioritizes strategic reorganization and targeted renovations across key academic facilities, including Sabin-Reed Hall, Burton Hall, Young Hall, Alumnae Gym, Mendenhall North Wing, and Lyman Plant House & Conservatory. Additional renovations in Dewey Hall and Hatfield Hall support pilot initiatives for divisional collaboration lounges and meeting spaces. Finally, ongoing renovations to renew and maintain all classrooms, labs, and general academic building conditions are prioritized to enable long-term future use.



Academic Framework

These examples from peer institutions and comparable projects offer precedents for the recommended spaces within the Academic Framework.



Shared Lounges



Transparent Street Presence



Bookable Meeting Spaces



Divisional Lounges



Welcoming Entries



Modern Classrooms



Flexible Collaboration Areas



Experimental Studios

Administrative Framework

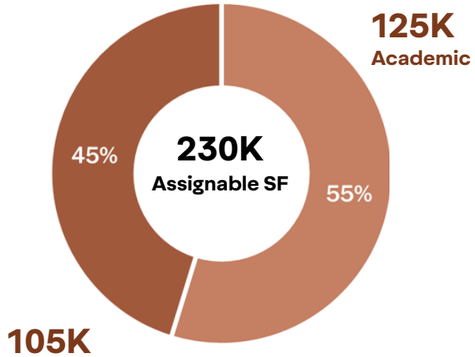
Administrative Framework

The Administrative Framework considers the system of offices, meeting areas, and support spaces that serve Smith's academic, student services, campus life, co-curricular, and operations departments.

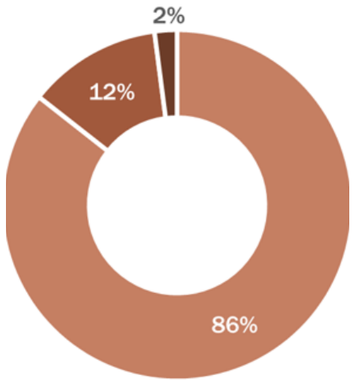
Key Findings

Office space on campus totals 230,000 ASF, representing 14% of total campus ASF. Of this total, 55% is considered academic and 45% is considered administrative. Overall, office sizes across campus are generally larger than necessary (acknowledging that historic buildings may shape office configurations and sizing), though new construction such as McCartney Hall align more closely with an industry office space standard of 100 SF per person.

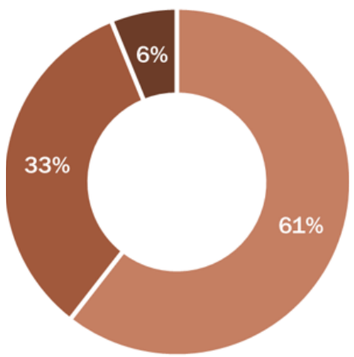
Findings from stakeholder listening sessions, online survey responses, and work sessions with leadership reveal that Smith's administrative life is adapting to uneven space quality, hybrid work, and scattered office locations. These engagements identified a need for clearer administrative space policies, improved departmental adjacencies, and a wider range of office and meeting spaces that better support privacy, collaboration, and student-facing services.



Academic Office Use

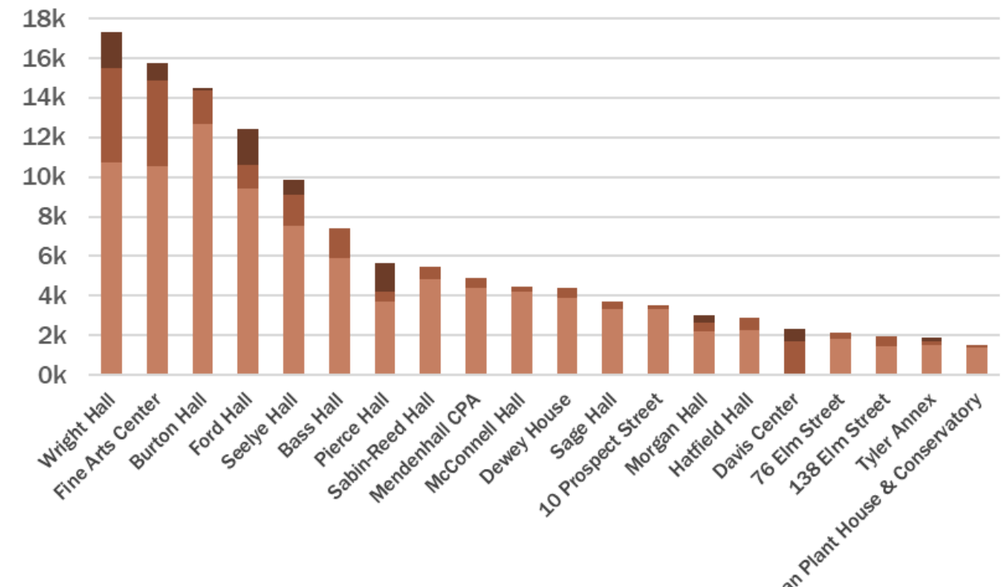


Administrative Office Use

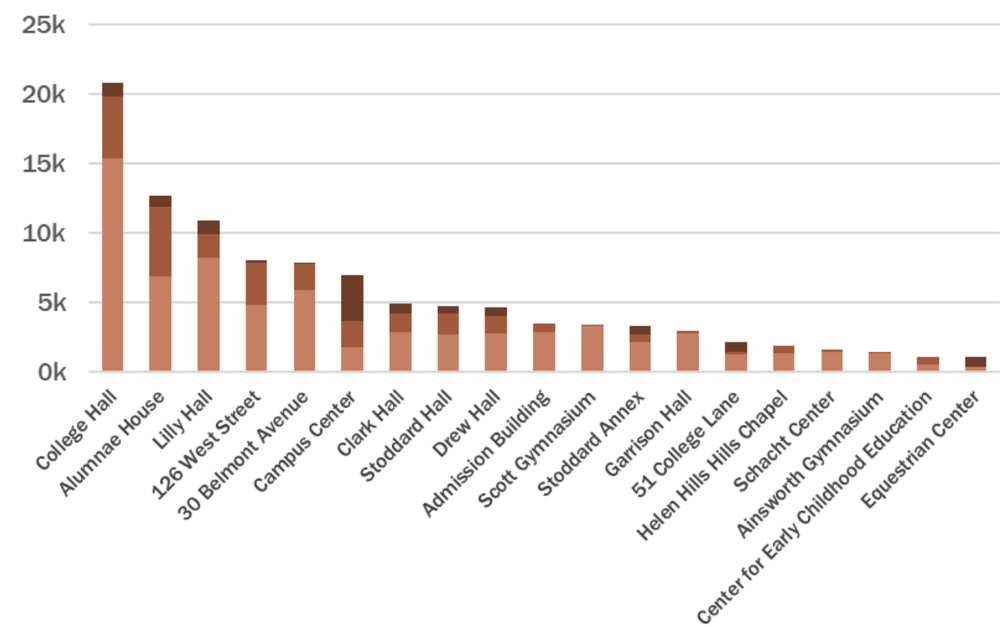


Office & Desks
Office Support
Meeting & Collaboration

Academic Office Use by Building



Administrative Office Use by Building



Workspace Variety and Equity

Staff and faculty expressed a need for a broader mix of work settings, ranging from private offices to collaborative zones. Neilson Library's office suite, where private offices surround a shared collaborative work area, was frequently cited as a successful model. Across all departments, additional support spaces such as kitchens, lounges, meeting rooms, touchdown spaces, storage areas, and wellness rooms are also needed. Concerns about inconsistent allocation processes and territorial space use point to the need for campus-wide administrative space guidelines and standards to promote equity, even within the constraints of older buildings.

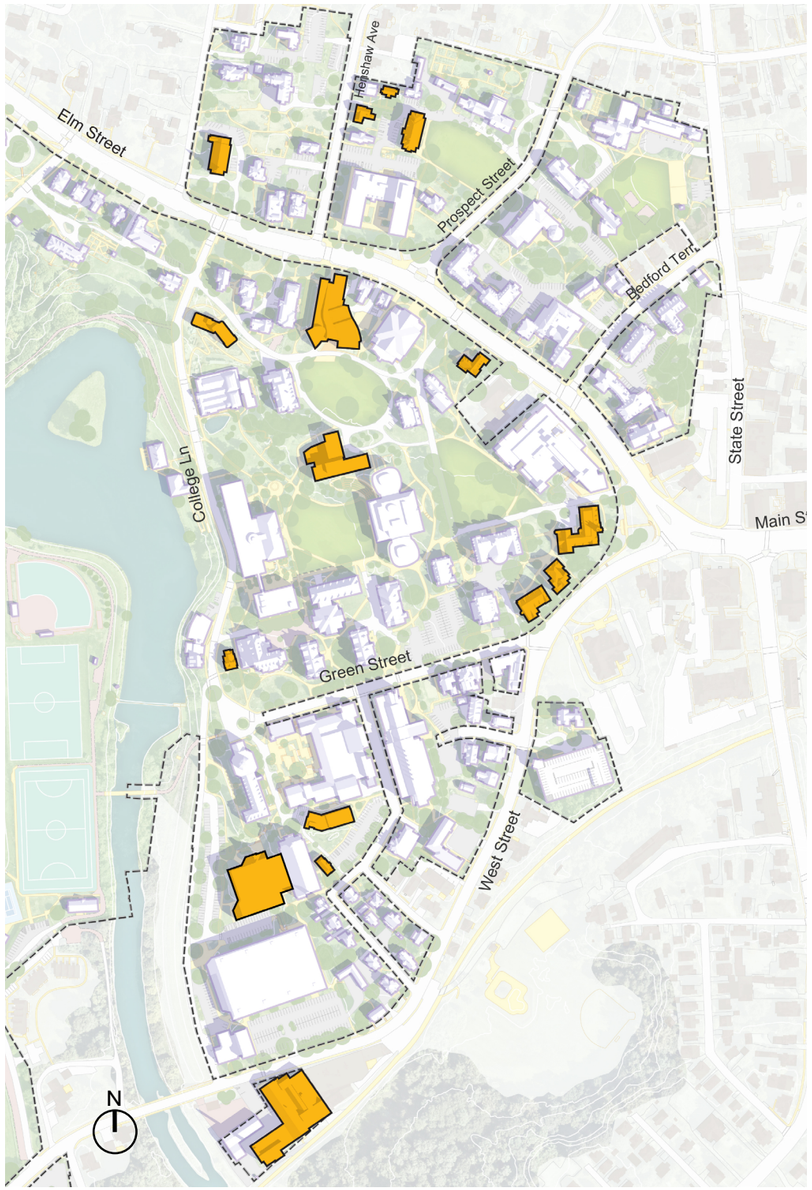
Hybrid Work and Meeting Needs

Like other institutions, Smith is responding to needs of a hybrid work model in certain departments that affects daily operations, community, and collaboration patterns. To support these evolving needs, the CUP calls for more shared, flexible meeting rooms and offices, with improved AV, soundproofing, and good environmental quality. Where appropriate, opportunities to pilot shared workspaces were discussed as ways to respond to hybrid work modes. The college will continue to explore these options.

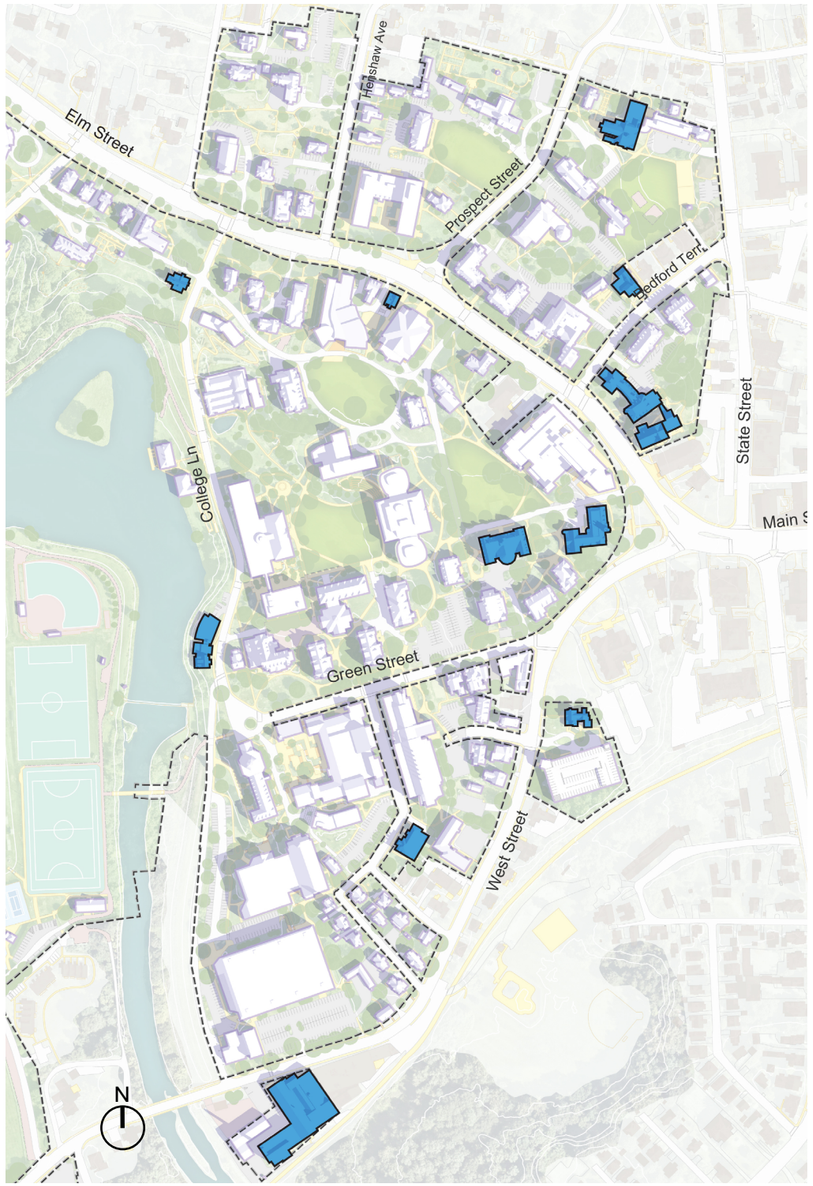
Adjacencies and Key Office Moves

Administrative units are dispersed across campus, reducing efficiency, collaboration, and ease of wayfinding—particularly for student-facing services. This spatial fragmentation suggests the need for improved departmental adjacencies and intentional clustering of related offices. The CUP proposes targeted office relocations to reinforce these clusters, enabling greater intra- and interdepartmental collaboration and the more effective sharing of space.

Existing Student-Facing Offices



Existing Nonstudent-Facing Offices



Renewal of Administrative Life Spaces

The CUP recommends pairing ongoing deferred maintenance efforts with programmatic improvements, integrating contemporary office models into renovations, and expanding the ecosystem of support spaces such as huddle rooms, lounges, and kitchenettes.

Across divisions and administrative departments, there is a clear need for enhanced reception areas, lounges, and commons spaces, as current environments do not adequately support community or convey a sense of welcome. More intentional reception and community spaces will help strengthen belonging and inclusivity. Refreshing and opening up ground-floor areas in select historic buildings, such as College Hall, will further improve access, visibility, and opportunities for collaboration. Minor interventions such as updated finishes, new furniture and improved graphics can also create more inviting spaces that promote spontaneous interaction and community-building.

In summary, the CUP emphasizes the need for clearer administrative space policies, improved departmental adjacencies, and a wider variety of office and meeting spaces that support privacy, collaboration, community-building, and student-facing services.

Goals

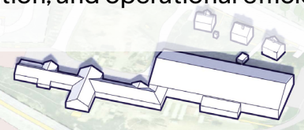
This might look like...

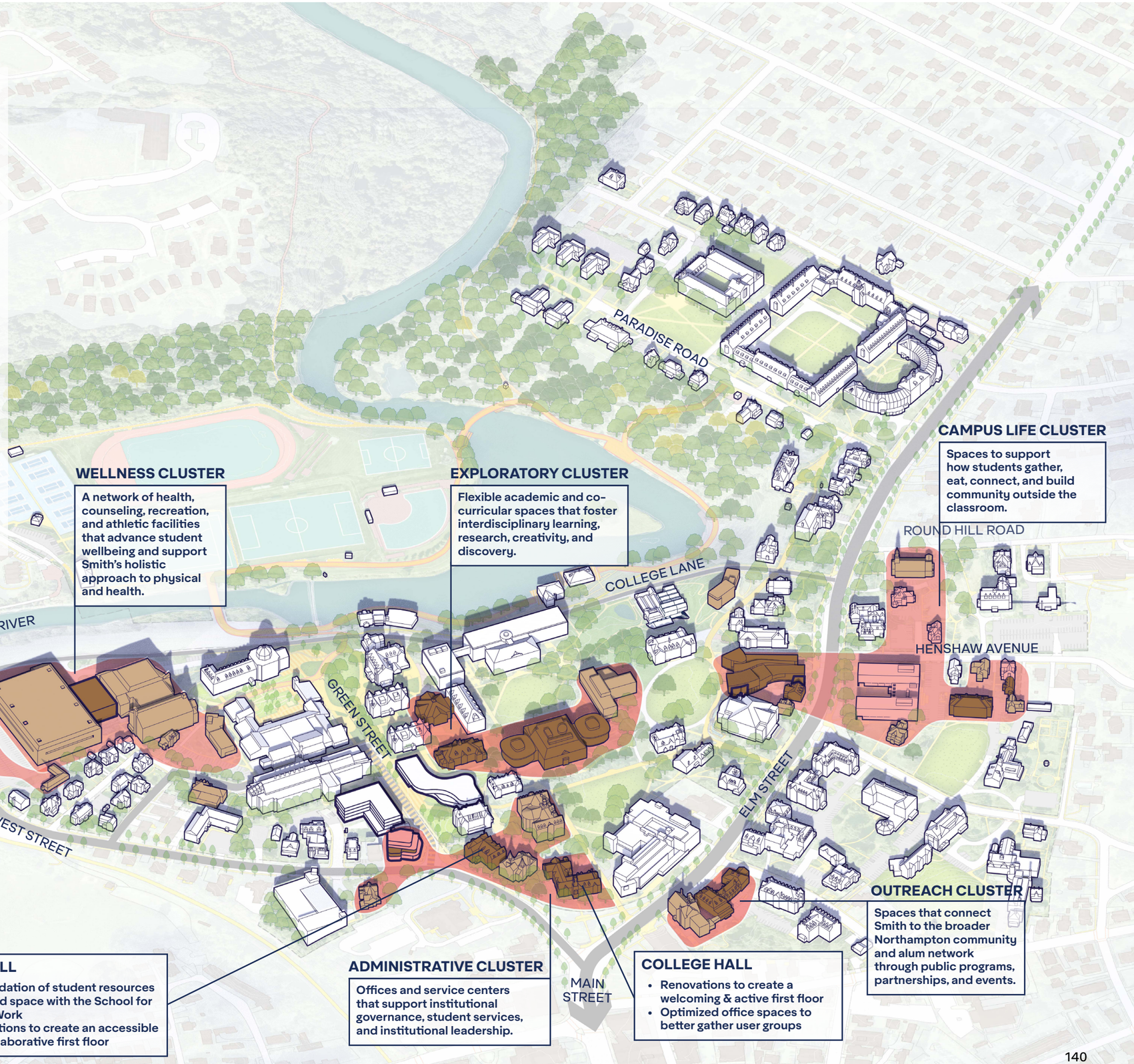
Goals	This might look like...
1. Cluster Distributed Offices Adjust the current distributed model by intentionally clustering student-facing and non-student-facing administrative offices where it improves accessibility and operational efficiency.	• Clustering units, such as student-facing administrative offices, wellness resources, exploratory departments and relocating some offices for improved adjacencies.
2. Improve Wayfinding Enhance signage and navigation tools to make it easier for everyone to find their way around campus and take advantage of all available resources.	• Updating signage, web and analog maps, and other campus wayfinding tools in a consistent manner.
3. Create Accessible and Welcoming Spaces Design administrative areas to be inclusive and welcoming for all users, regardless of ability.	• Prioritizing accessibility renovations as well as minor transparency, finish, and furniture updates to refresh reception and collaboration areas, while maintaining privacy of certain spaces according to functional needs.
4. Encourage In-Person Interaction Foster face-to-face engagement across all units, even as more processes move online to reinforce a core part of the Smith experience.	• Fostering in-person engagement, improving visibility, and making spaces more welcoming to make face-to-face interaction even more effective and appealing.
5. Ensure Equity in Space Allocation Develop standards for administrative space allocation that support fairness across divisions and departments, promote efficient use of space, and align with contemporary workplace needs.	• Establishing campus-wide guidelines for administrative space distribution and applying these standards during reorganization, renovation, and new construction.

Administrative Framework

Administrative office clustering is recommended to improve access to services, clarify wayfinding, and create more welcoming and effective spaces for the Smith community. While some clusters already exist—such as the adjacent Athletics buildings and the Schacht Center, which together form a Wellness Cluster—suggested updates to Ainsworth and Scott gyms will strengthen this clustering, improving visibility, accessibility, and coordination of wellness resources.

Additional clustering strategies, including the proposed Campus Life Cluster, focus on reprogramming and updating spaces within the Julia Child Center, John M. Green Hall, and the Davis Center to better support student life and community building. These strategies are discussed further in the Campus Life Framework. Further, the CUP recommendations prioritize targeted updates to the Administrative Cluster, particularly in Lilly Hall and College Hall, to create clearer student services hubs that enhance access, navigation, and operational efficiency.





WELLNESS CLUSTER

A network of health, counseling, recreation, and athletic facilities that advance student wellbeing and support Smith's holistic approach to physical and health.

EXPLORATORY CLUSTER

Flexible academic and co-curricular spaces that foster interdisciplinary learning, research, creativity, and discovery.

CAMPUS LIFE CLUSTER

Spaces to support how students gather, eat, connect, and build community outside the classroom.

CAMPUS OPERATIONS CLUSTER

Facilities and infrastructure that support the day-to-day functioning of the College, including maintenance, utilities, and operational services essential to campus continuity.

LILLY HALL

- Consolidation of student resources in shared space with the School for Social Work
- Renovations to create an accessible and collaborative first floor

ADMINISTRATIVE CLUSTER

Offices and service centers that support institutional governance, student services, and institutional leadership.

COLLEGE HALL

- Renovations to create a welcoming & active first floor
- Optimized office spaces to better gather user groups

OUTREACH CLUSTER

Spaces that connect Smith to the broader Northampton community and alum network through public programs, partnerships, and events.

Administrative Framework

These examples from peer institutions and comparable projects offer precedents for the recommended spaces within the Administrative Framework.



Welcoming Entries



Refreshed Commons



Shared Programming



Collaboration Areas

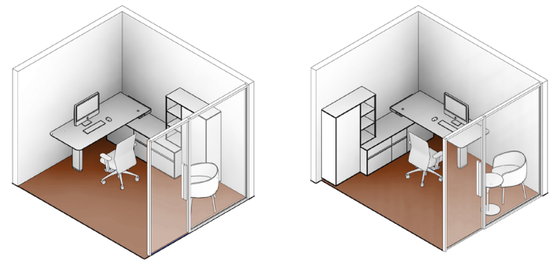
Address Hybrid Work Modes

Where appropriate for administrative operations, Smith will continue exploring opportunities to pilot shared-work environments, including touchdown offices, online conference, and huddle rooms, as alternatives or complements to the current predominantly private office model. These shared spaces offer efficiencies in space utilization while also supporting community-building, collaboration, and evolving hybrid work patterns.

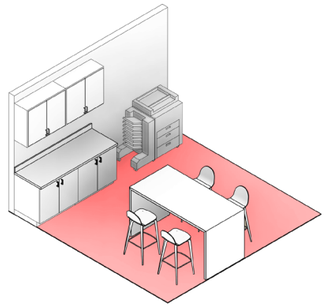
Ongoing Updates

As campus buildings undergo ongoing renewal, it is recommended that deferred maintenance issues and accessibility and code compliance challenges be addressed within administrative spaces whenever project budgets allow. This approach leverages routine capital improvements to incrementally strengthen the quality, functionality, and inclusivity of administrative environments.

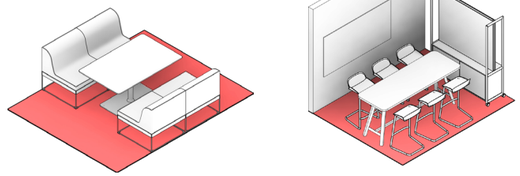
Small Office: 80–100 SF



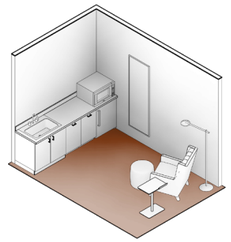
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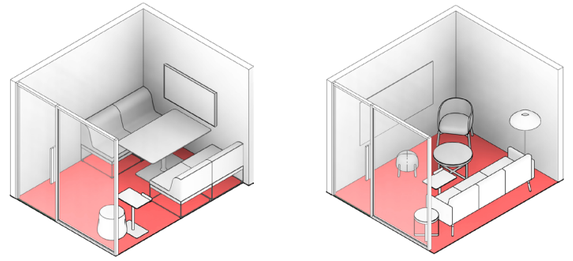
Open Collaboration Areas: 80 SF



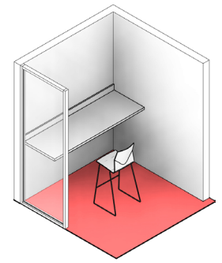
Wellness Rooms: 80–100 SF



Huddle Rooms: 80 SF



Focus Booths: 36–50 SF



Campus Life Framework

Campus Life Framework

The Campus Life Framework examines the network of campus community spaces including dining venues, event and performance spaces, cultural hubs, and social gathering areas.

Key Findings

Existing Community Spaces

Campus gathering spaces are distributed across Smith, with the Julia Child Center intended to serve as the heart of community life at the campus core. However, community feedback indicated that the building is not fully fulfilling this role, with many echoing a sentiment voiced during early listening sessions: *"The Campus Center is a beautiful hallway, not a campus gathering space."*

John M. Greene Hall functions as Smith's largest event space, hosting signature events such as Rally Day and local celebrations such as Northampton High School graduation, yet it is not actively used on a daily basis. Cultural spaces are primarily located along Green Street and Elm Street, while only a small number of houses host student organization spaces such as the Yearbook in King House and Smith Cycle in Scales House.

House community space, addressed more fully in the House Life Framework, has diminished in recent years due to the need to accommodate additional beds and other campus functions, increasing the need for social spaces on campus. The unavailability of Davis Ballroom and the Carroll Room for events due to structural concerns points to a need for large, flexible spaces for community gathering and events.

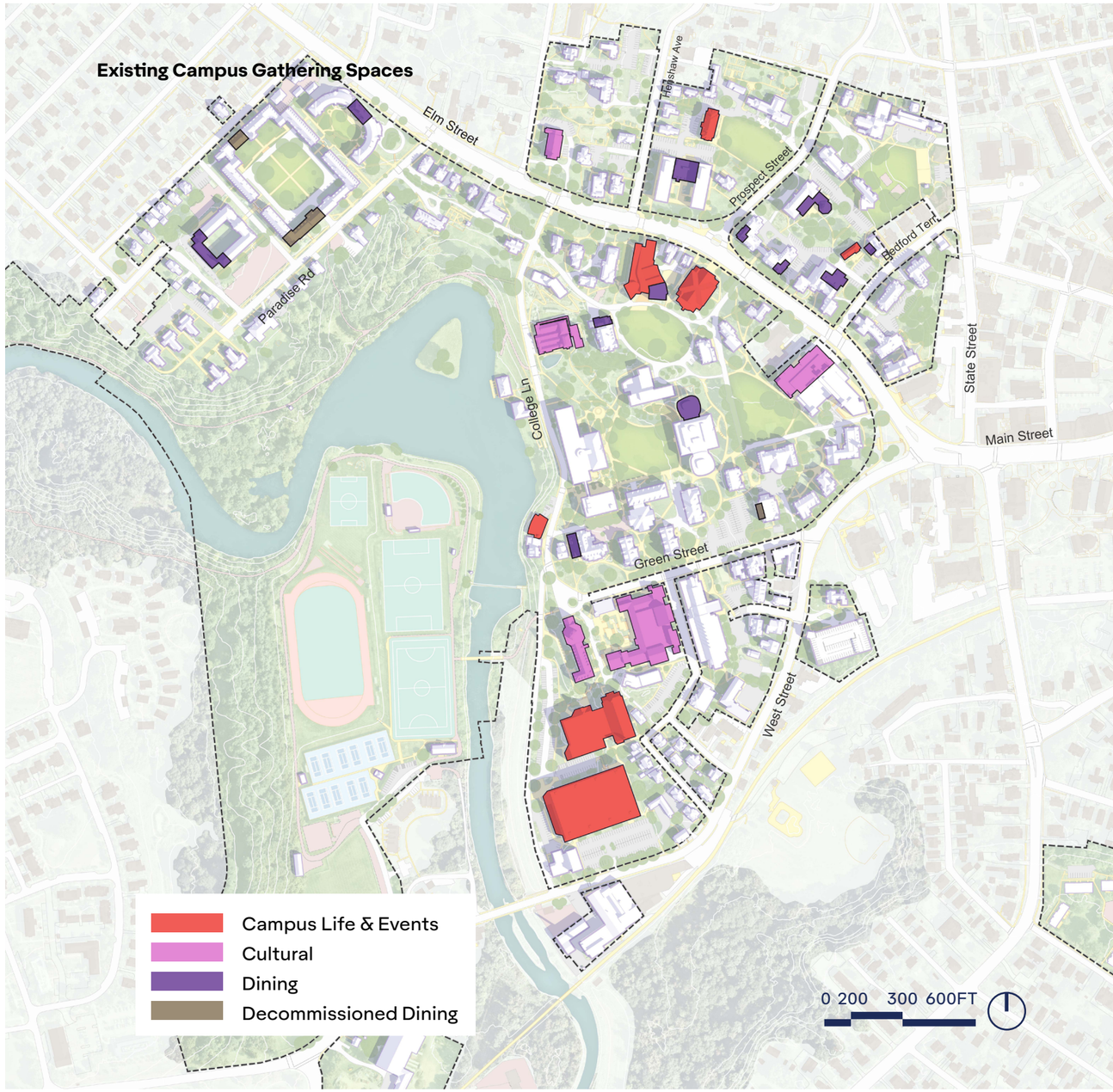
Academic gathering spaces range from Lyman Plant House to Neilson Library, which underwent a major renovation in 2021 and now serves as a central destination for studying, gathering, meeting for coffee, and just bumping into community members. Overall, existing community spaces are largely specialized in use, highlighting a campus-wide need for more multipurpose, distributed spaces and clearer policies that can support a broader range of activities and community-building opportunities.

Alignment with *Compass 2035*

A Call for Community Spaces

A core goal of *Compass 2035* is to ***"foster well-being, belonging, and resilience across our community."*** CUP engagement findings strongly echo this goal, with MyCampus data showing that improving social and community spaces is critical and was notably the only priority shared across students, faculty, staff, and alums. Open forums called for more third spaces—neutral, non-residential, and non-academic places that support spontaneous interaction, collaboration, and a sense of belonging for the entire campus community. Outdoor areas were similarly referenced as critical spaces for gathering, wellness, and spontaneous fun. Finally, community members also underscored the importance of traditions in sustaining Smith connections, noting that campus spaces should better support and adapt to these longstanding practices.

Existing Campus Gathering Spaces



Dining Model

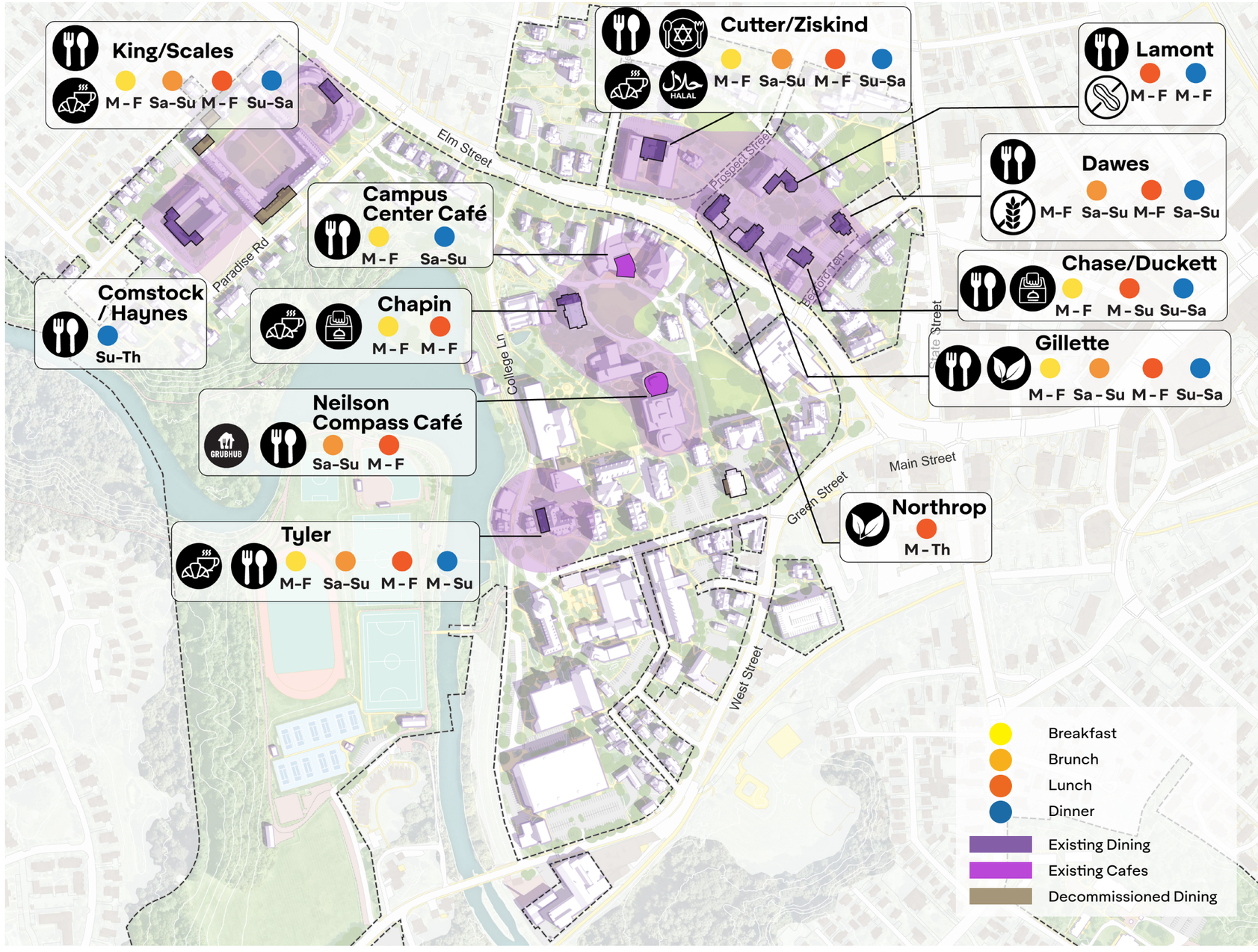
Food plays a central role in cultivating community, and the CUP engagement surfaced both strengths and limitations of the current dining model.

Smith currently operates nine dining spaces with 1,910 seats and two retail dining venues, the Campus Center Cafe and Compass Cafe at Neilson Library. The dining spaces serve students, while the two cafes are open to students, staff, faculty and visitors.

The operational, scheduling, and dietary complexity of the dining model becomes clearer in a review of the adjacent diagram, as individual locations have distinct hours and offerings. Engagement revealed some key takeaways:

- Students requested expanded late-night dining options.
- Students noted that the distributed dining model makes it difficult to eat with friends who have different dietary needs.
- Community members expressed a desire for more diverse dining venues open to the broader Smith community, as faculty and staff reported that they often feel unwelcome in existing dining venues, including the cafes.
- Dining operations highlighted inefficiencies in the current distributed model, including staffing challenges, constraints on menu planning, sustainability targets, and difficulties in tracking meals under the swipe system.
- The distributed dining model creates a high volume of food waste due to an inability to fully predict food consumption at each location per meal.

Existing Campus Dining



Event Spaces

Engagement discussions underscored the need to expand and diversify event spaces and to revisit the college's space use policies. Community members cited a shortage of large, flexible venues for major campus events and activities, as well as a lack of informal, unreserved gathering areas. Students emphasized the need for more small- and medium-scale social spaces for personal and organization-run events, noting that current policies and cultural norms often discourage hosting. This challenge is amplified by the conversion of house common rooms into additional beds—reducing adjacent living-room spaces that once supported lively, social activity. As a result, students increasingly seek social spaces outside their residences, shifting long-standing dimensions of Smith house culture.

There is also a pronounced need for accessible large-scale event venues. The limitations of Davis as a party space has constrained options for all campus events, and student theater groups have been pushed into abnormal spaces due to departmental policies that limit their use of formal performance spaces. These conditions illustrate the interrelationship of physical space, social norms, and campus policy and highlight the need to reconsider policies with the goal of increasing student agency, community-building, and the overall vibrancy of campus life.

Sharing of Spaces

Students, staff, and faculty described a perceived lack of agency to use interior and exterior campus spaces, noting that policies and social norms often limit the sharing of places across the college. **"All Smith is Smith space"** emerged as a core Campus Life aspiration, accompanied by a call to **"prioritize increasing the feeling that space can be shared, space is welcoming, and space can be flexible."** Together, these goals point to opportunities for broader discussion about how to support this objective and foster greater agency and belonging on campus.

Subtle moves, including increased transparency into space availability, clearer wayfinding, and adjustments to campus policy, can be paired with the strategic provision of new and existing spaces to address this need. Targeted space policy tweaks, combined with the creation of spaces that can accommodate different uses and levels of activity, can increase accessibility, support shared use, and strengthen the sense that all members of the community are welcome across campus.

Accessibility and Inclusivity Challenges

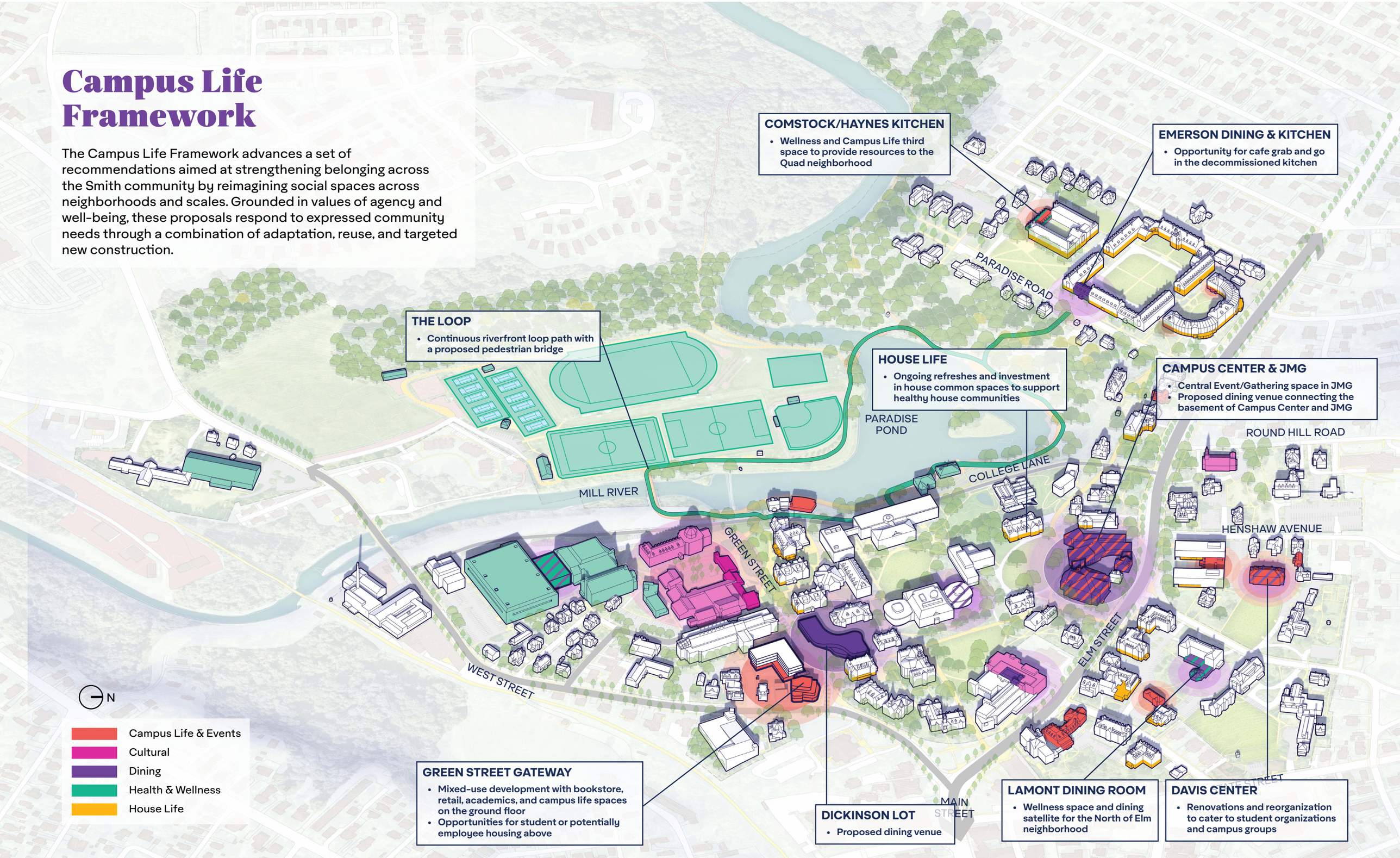
Public venues such as John M. Greene Hall and the Mendenhall Center for the Performing Arts have notable accessibility limitations, diminishing their role as welcoming community spaces. Improving physical accessibility surfaced in virtually every CUP listening session and is addressed in greater depth within the Mobility and Accessibility Framework. These challenges also intersect with the Campus Life Framework, as accessibility directly shapes experiences of belonging and inclusivity. Campus discussions further emphasized the need for a variety of community spaces that support different communities, social preferences, and a wide range of neurodiverse needs.

Goals

Goals	This might look like...
1. Reinvigorate Smith Dining Explore additional dining options that foster a sense of community and connection for all.	• Creating an updated dining network that includes community-based dining spaces and an array of satellite dining venues.
2. Create Flexible Event Spaces Reimagine event areas with adaptable layouts and programming opportunities, prioritizing the provision of convenient spaces for student-hosted events.	• Updating JMG to become a flexible and state-of-the art campus event space to be used more frequently for varied activities. • Increasing accessibility into existing event spaces, such as Mendenhall CPA. • Adjusting availability and governance of party spaces to support student agency and independence.
3. Provide Diverse Third Spaces Create a range of informal gathering spots that support conversation, connection, and belonging for all Smith community members.	• Introducing third spaces for students in houses, for the general community in a renovated Campus Center, and for faculty and staff in divisional lounges. • Refreshing Davis Center to provide dedicated space for student organizations. • Adapting decommissioned dining spaces to provide gathering spaces and resources at the neighborhood scale.
4. Integrate Landscape Design active and passive outdoor spaces that invite community use and enjoyment.	• Enhancing campus use of campus lawns and gardens, with increased programming and connectivity between active and passive landscapes. • Centering the Mill River with the Loop. • Extending the Olmstedian landscape along and across Green Street.
5. Broaden Athletics & Recreation Introduce spaces for athletics, wellness, and recreation that serve the whole community.	• Making recreation and athletics spaces more welcoming and inclusive to benefit the entire Smith community. • Distributing wellness and recreation resources across campus.

Campus Life Framework

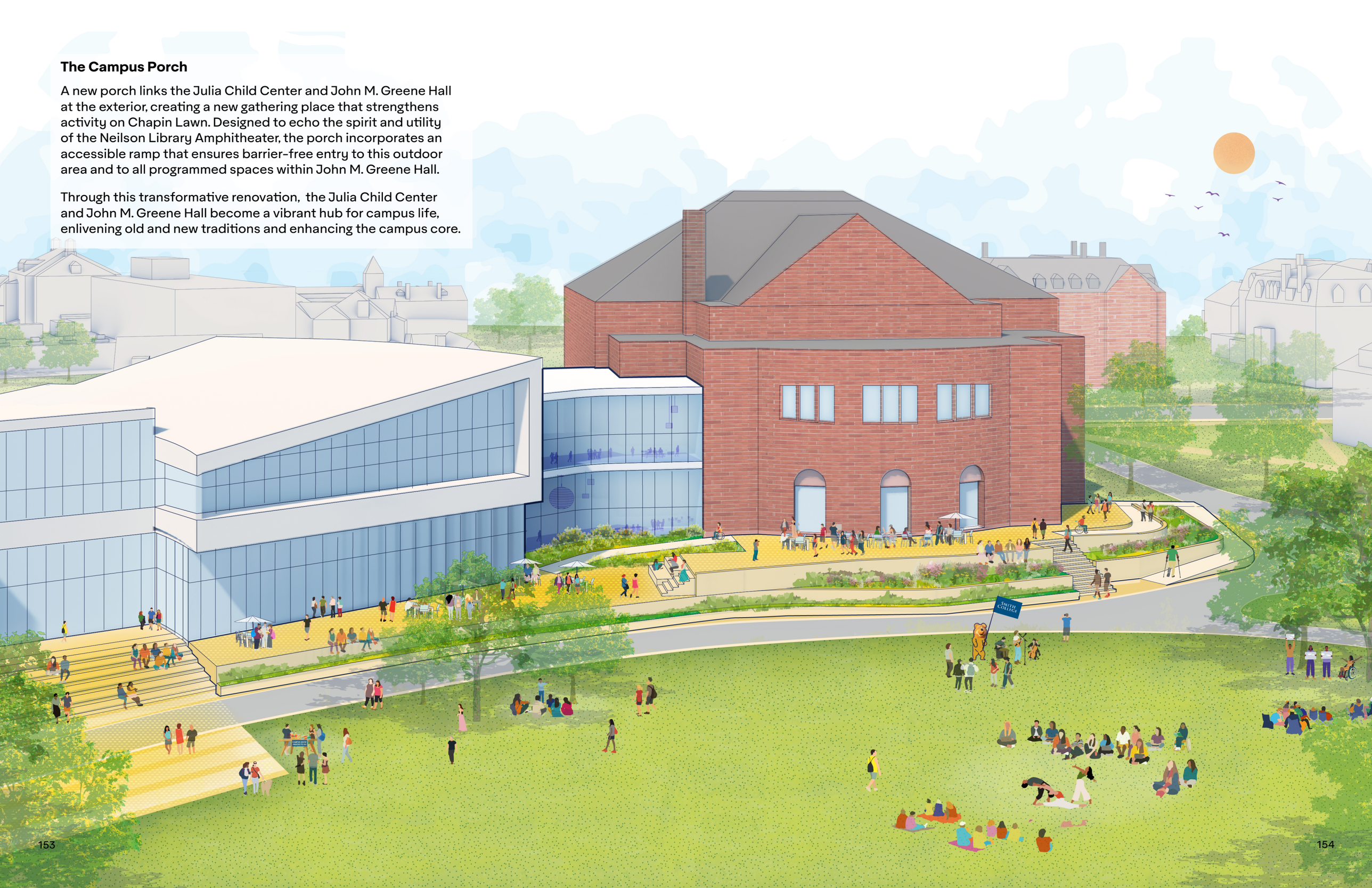
The Campus Life Framework advances a set of recommendations aimed at strengthening belonging across the Smith community by reimagining social spaces across neighborhoods and scales. Grounded in values of agency and well-being, these proposals respond to expressed community needs through a combination of adaptation, reuse, and targeted new construction.



The Campus Porch

A new porch links the Julia Child Center and John M. Greene Hall at the exterior, creating a new gathering place that strengthens activity on Chapin Lawn. Designed to echo the spirit and utility of the Neilson Library Amphitheater, the porch incorporates an accessible ramp that ensures barrier-free entry to this outdoor area and to all programmed spaces within John M. Greene Hall.

Through this transformative renovation, the Julia Child Center and John M. Greene Hall become a vibrant hub for campus life, enlivening old and new traditions and enhancing the campus core.



Campus Life Framework

These examples from peer institutions and comparable projects offer precedents for the recommended spaces within the Campus Life Framework.



Student Pub



Teaching Kitchen



Late Night Dining



Campus Porch



Grab and Go



Outdoor Seating



Marketplace Dining

House Life Framework

House Life Framework

Smith's unique residential system shapes the way community is built and sustained across campus through self-governing communities and student life at the house scale. The house system is foundational to Smith's identity—an enduring model of residential life that blends tradition, autonomy, and deep social connection.

Key Findings

Existing House Network

The house-scale residential system is a defining element of the Smith experience and was noted as a major draw for students who chose the college. The houses function as *"unique, self-governing house communities"* of 10 to 100 students and are designed to help students ***"meet new people, form meaningful relationships, and create community through both formal and informal interactions."*** Houses span architectural eras from the 1710s to the 2010s, creating a diversity of experiences shaped by the physical house size and configuration. Many students remain in the same house over the course of their four years, contributing to close-knit communities that have played a key role in forming lifelong friendships between Smith students since its founding. Historically, the house system was reinforced by a decentralized dining model in which students ate most meals within their own houses. As of today, only nine houses have dining facilities located within them.

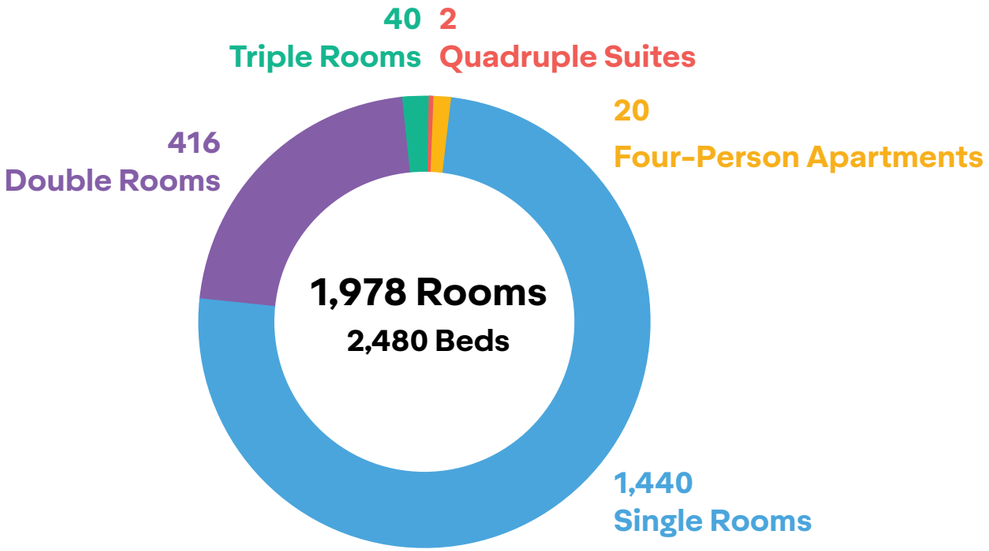
As of Fall 2024, there were 2,480 beds on campus in 41 houses comprising 1.12M GSF (approximately 439 SF/student), with an occupancy rate of 98%. This high occupancy has led to the repurposing of some house commons spaces into new beds, reducing community space in the houses. Restoring house-level social space was emphasized as a primary objective. The lack of surplus rooms also complicates renovation timelines, pointing to the need for "swing beds" to support phased upgrades.

Residential Neighborhoods

Students perceive four residential neighborhoods outside of their individual houses: The Quad, North of Elm, South of Elm, and Green Street. A large concentration of beds occurs at the Quad neighborhood, which is made up of ten houses and the Friedman apartments. North of Elm also houses a significant number of students in residences of varying sizes, while houses South of Elm and along Green Street skew towards being smaller in size. While community occurs at the house level, the CUP explores additional neighborhood-scale third spaces that contribute to community building across houses.

Existing Residential Neighborhoods





Typology of Units

Most houses offer a mix of singles and doubles, though some smaller houses—particularly special-interest houses—are predominantly singles. Over 60% of student beds are singles, followed by doubles at approximately 17%. There is high demand for singles, increased recently by the number of accommodations requested by students. Peer institutions are increasingly introducing suites and apartments with singles and shared unit common spaces that support both privacy and community. At Smith, demand for apartments is growing, creating competition for the Friedman Apartments which currently provide limited supply of this housing typology. These units support a transitional experience toward greater independence and are a valued component of on-campus living.

Currently, housing for Social Work students, visiting alums, and staff members are limited to summer availability. Planning discussions have explored opportunities to introduce affordable housing options for these communities, with potential for Public–Private Partnerships. The Ellery Hotel, owned and operated by Smith, continues to offer visitor accommodations.





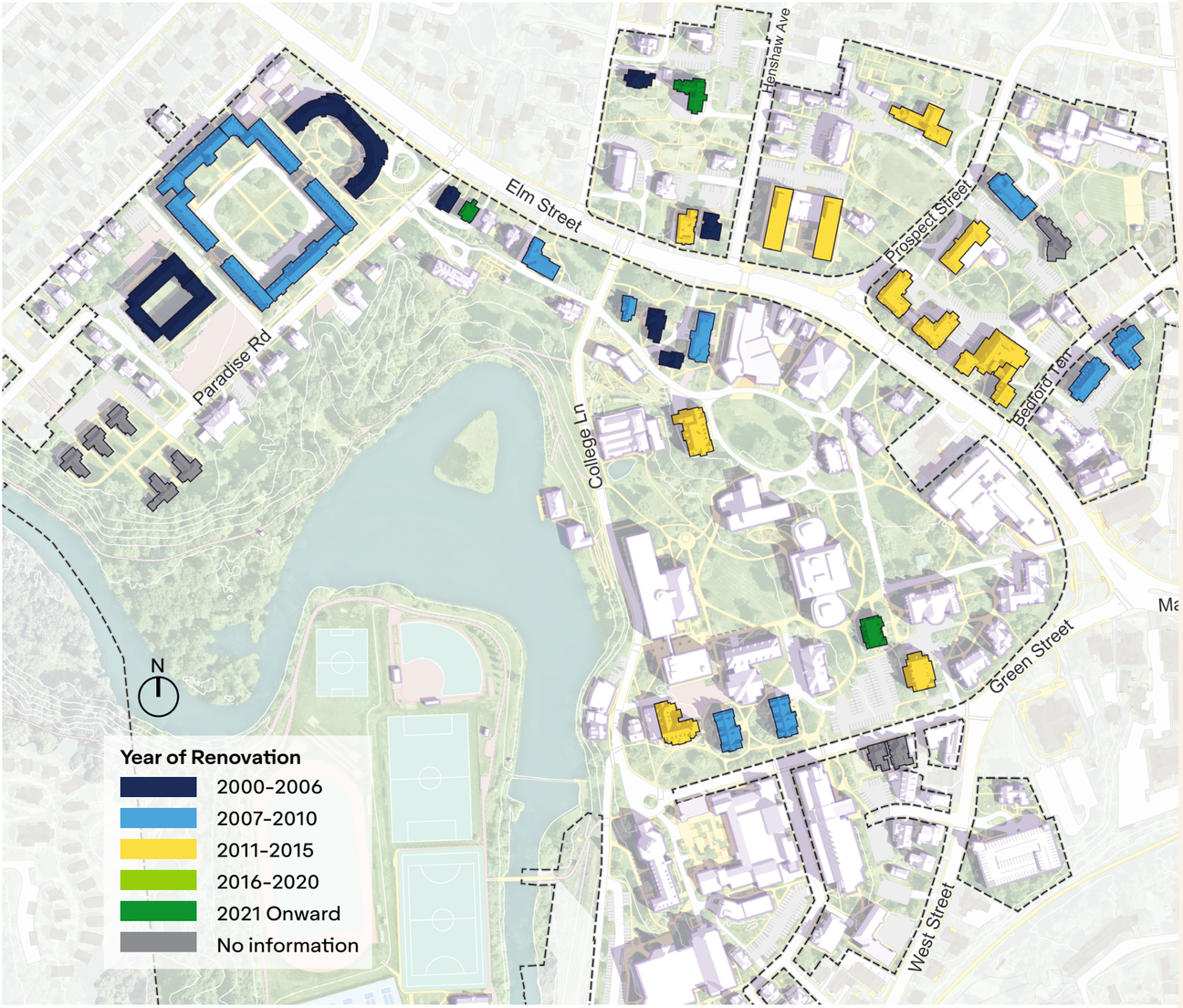








Existing Recent House Renovations



House Building Condition

Few houses have undergone significant renovations since 2016 due to limited renewal funding. While there have been some finish, furniture and equipment refreshes, many houses require significant upgrades. As part of Smith's geothermal project, connections to the updated district energy system are being made incrementally, with house improvements added where feasible. Refreshes to houses has been identified as a key CUP priority throughout community engagement discussions, with renovations to the Quad listed as a key priority. Swing beds would be necessary to enable these much-needed updates.

Goals

This might look like...

1. Enhance Wellness at the House Scale

Better align residences with the evolving needs of students, making improvements to accessibility and community building.

- Refreshing houses to create welcoming and inclusive residences, responding to current expectations relative to peer institutions.
- Responding to accessibility and neurodiversity needs for accommodations.

2. Support Student Growth and Independence

Create opportunities for a pathway to more independent living over the course of the four years at Smith.

- Exploring opportunities for added suites and apartments to increase independent living options in response to demand.
- Investing in house common space and kitchen refurbishment to support agency within the residential system.

3. Develop a Long-Term Renovation Strategy for Student Houses

Invest in the 1.1 million SF of residential space, addressing deferred maintenance, as well as code and program updates.

- Creating a house renewal plan with identified swing bed opportunities.
- Developing a house accessibility plan to align with renewal needs.

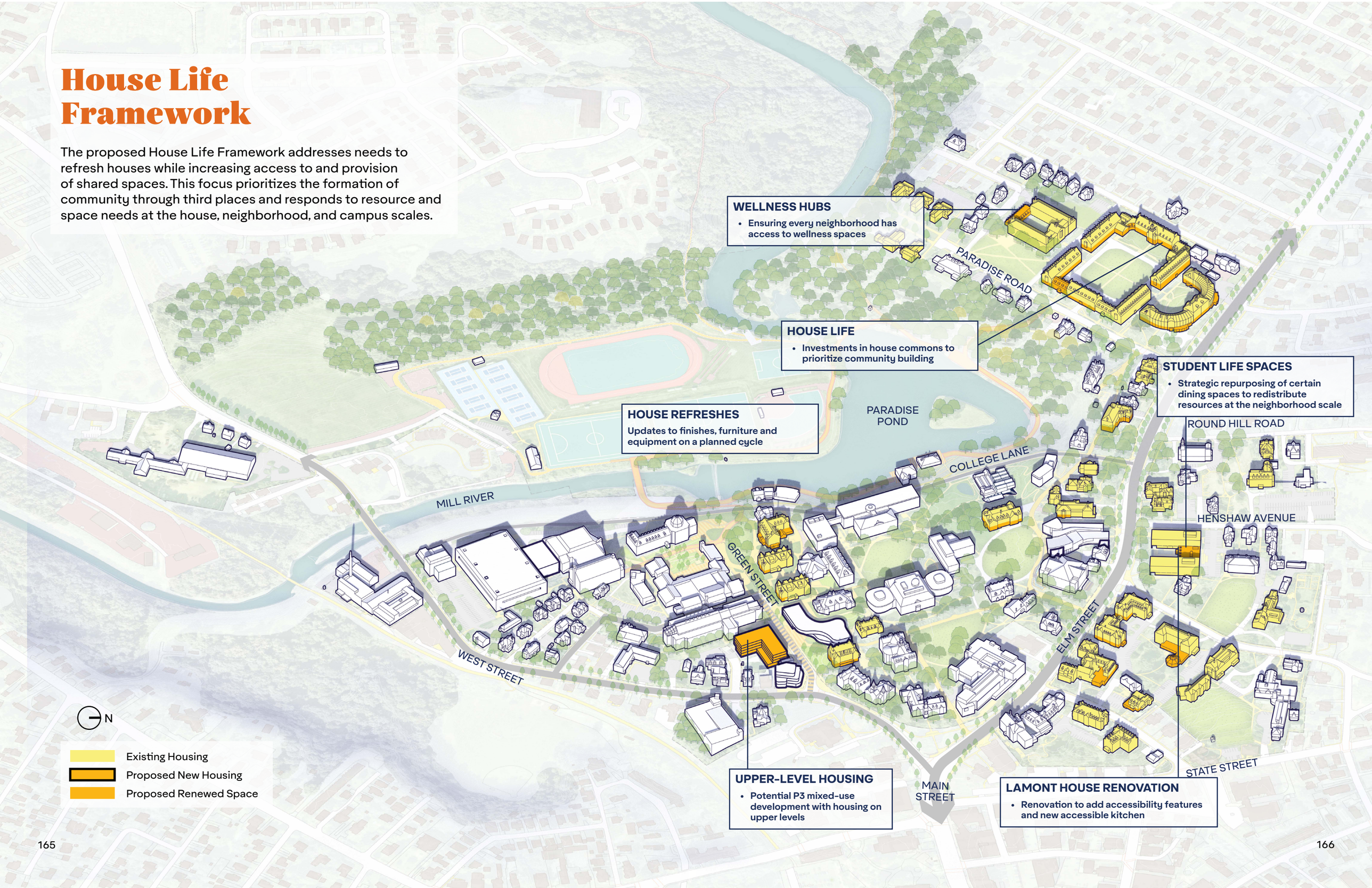
4. Create More Student Gathering Spaces

Enhance the network of student "third spaces" that are neither home nor workplace, especially at the neighborhood scale to foster community-building across campus.

- Returning commons to house use,
- Examining ways to pilot additional third spaces in underutilized house spaces such as decommissioned kitchens and dining areas.
- Accommodating a variety of activities both at the house scale and the neighborhood scale in third spaces.

House Life Framework

The proposed House Life Framework addresses needs to refresh houses while increasing access to and provision of shared spaces. This focus prioritizes the formation of community through third places and responds to resource and space needs at the house, neighborhood, and campus scales.



House Life Framework

These examples from peer institutions and comparable projects offer precedents for the recommended spaces within the House Life Framework.



Music and Event Space



Student-run Cafe



Wellness Resources



Makerspace



Quiet Study



Refreshed Commons



Open Flex Space

Wellness & Recreation Framework

Wellness & Recreation Framework

The Wellness and Recreation Framework encompasses the indoor and outdoor athletic, recreation, and wellness venues that promote health and well-being across campus.

Key Findings

Alignment with *Compass 2035* Wellness Goals

As reported in the Campus Life section, wellness is a priority that came up frequently in the CUP discussions with the community. Additionally, it is one of the key priorities defined in *Compass 2035*.

Existing Resources

Athletics, recreation and wellness facilities are largely located in the southwestern area of campus and along the Mill River. The following are identified as athletics and recreation resources:

- Ainsworth Gym
- Scott Gym
- Dalton Pool (in the Ainsworth building)
- Olin Fitness Center
- Indoor Track and Tennis Complex
- Climbing Wall/Fitness Studio
- Outdoor Challenge Course
- Outdoor Tennis Courts
- Smith Rowing Boathouse
- Paradise Pond Boathouse
- Outdoor Softball, Turf, and Soccer Fields
- MacLeish Field Station
- Schacht Center for Health & Wellness

These facilities were evaluated in coordination with the *Ainsworth-Scott-Olin Concept Design Study*, developed concurrently by the Gund Partnership. Outdoor landscapes—including the woods west of the playing fields, numerous lawns, gardens, and wooded areas—provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation. The CUP calls for balancing these uses to support a full spectrum of wellness needs.

Campus Use of Wellness Resources

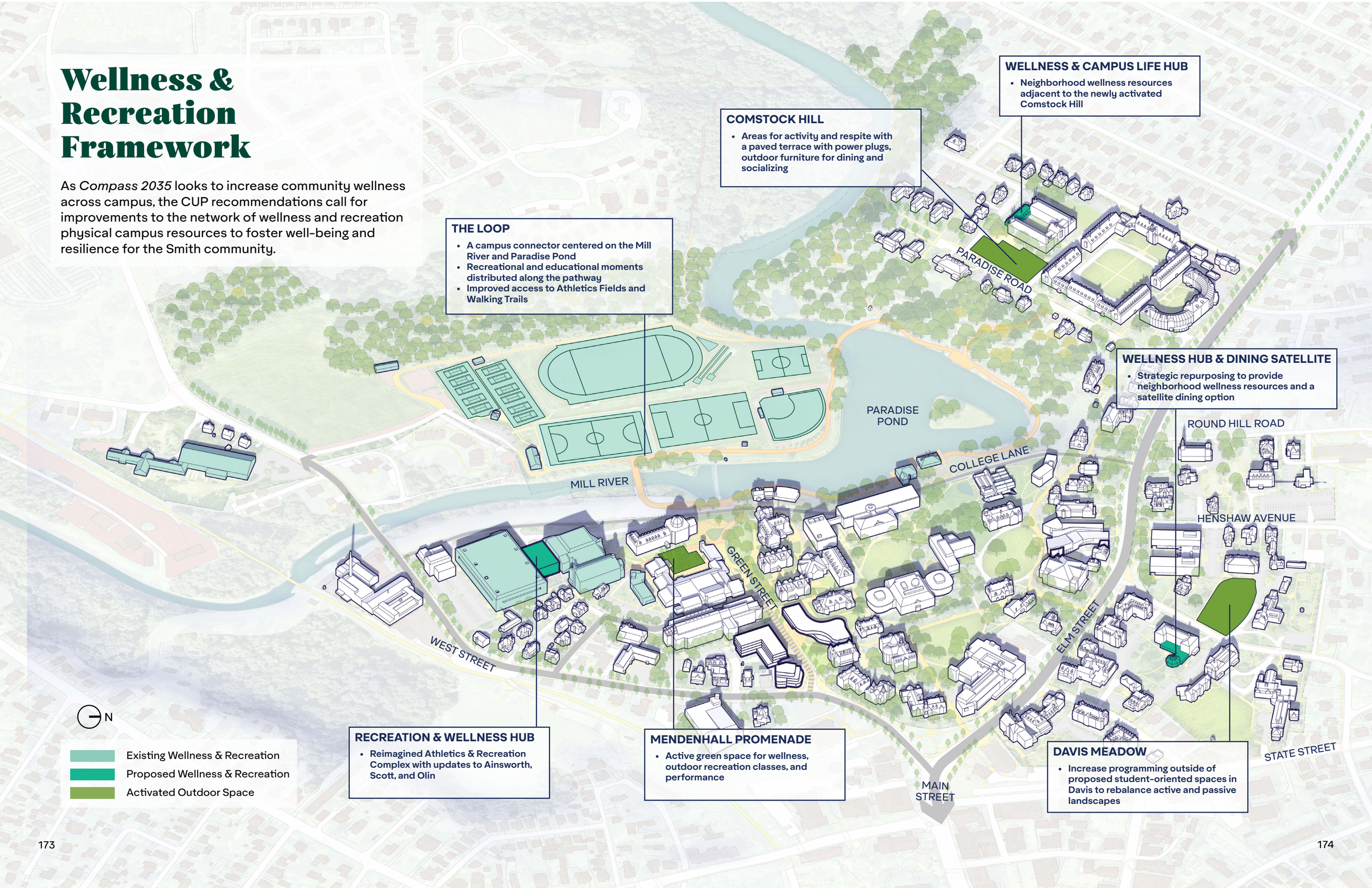
Listening sessions and other community engagement suggest that not all community members feel welcome in campus wellness venues, especially staff and faculty. Access to Ainsworth and Scott Gyms is challenging given existing site grading and topography. Community members also emphasized the importance of mental health as part of the greater conversation around health and well-being. Opportunities to make these facilities feel more inviting for use by all and for holistic health needs are encouraged to foster community wellness.

Goals

	This might look like...
1. Nurture the Mind, Body, and Spirit in an Updated Athletics & Recreation Center Update the Athletics Complex to become a wellness resource for the entire community.	• Investing in both short-term, small-scale and long-term transformational renovations to Ainsworth and Scott Gyms.
2. Create Active and Passive Landscapes Enhance areas for both active recreation and quiet respite. Celebrate indoor and outdoor dance, yoga, performance – movement.	• Updating programming of campus lawns to encourage a balance of active and passive landscapes per the original Olmsted Plan. • Looking at future enhancements and expansions of outdoor space, enabled by more efficiently laid out parking areas and a transformed Green Street.
3. Encourage Connection Between Wellness Resources Facilitate closer connection between the Athletics Complex and Schacht Center.	• Integrating Gund Partnership recommendations for improved connections between the Athletics Complex and Schacht Center, creating an accessible hub for wellness.
4. Improve the Link to Athletic Fields, Walking Trails, and Riverfront Recreation Create a continuous pathway, the Loop, along the river with a pedestrian footbridge connection.	• Creating a campus connector centered on the Mill River — the Loop — to encourage both recreational and educational use along the waterfront with a new footbridge to better connect the community to fields, trails and recreational activity.
3. Create Places for a Variety of Movement Celebrate movement and wellness through spaces and programming across campus.	• Embedding access to wellness resources in every neighborhood. • Programming spaces to showcase traditions and performances.

Wellness & Recreation Framework

As *Compass 2035* looks to increase community wellness across campus, the CUP recommendations call for improvements to the network of wellness and recreation physical campus resources to foster well-being and resilience for the Smith community.



Wellness & Recreation Framework

These examples from peer institutions and comparable projects offer precedents for the recommended spaces within the Wellness & Recreation Framework.



Gym Refresh
Source: Gund Partners



Locker Room Refresh



Passive Landscapes



Active Landscapes



Updated Athletics & Recreation Center
Source: Gund Partners



Neighborhood Wellness Resources

Landscape & Public Realm Framework

Landscape & Public Realm Framework

The Landscape & Public Realm Framework considers Smith's open spaces, woodlands, and the connective systems that shape campus life. It defines the experience of the college's natural environment and ecology, the ways students and community members live, learn, and socialize outdoors, and the physical connections that knit the campus together.

Key Findings

Building on the 2022 *Landscape Master Plan*

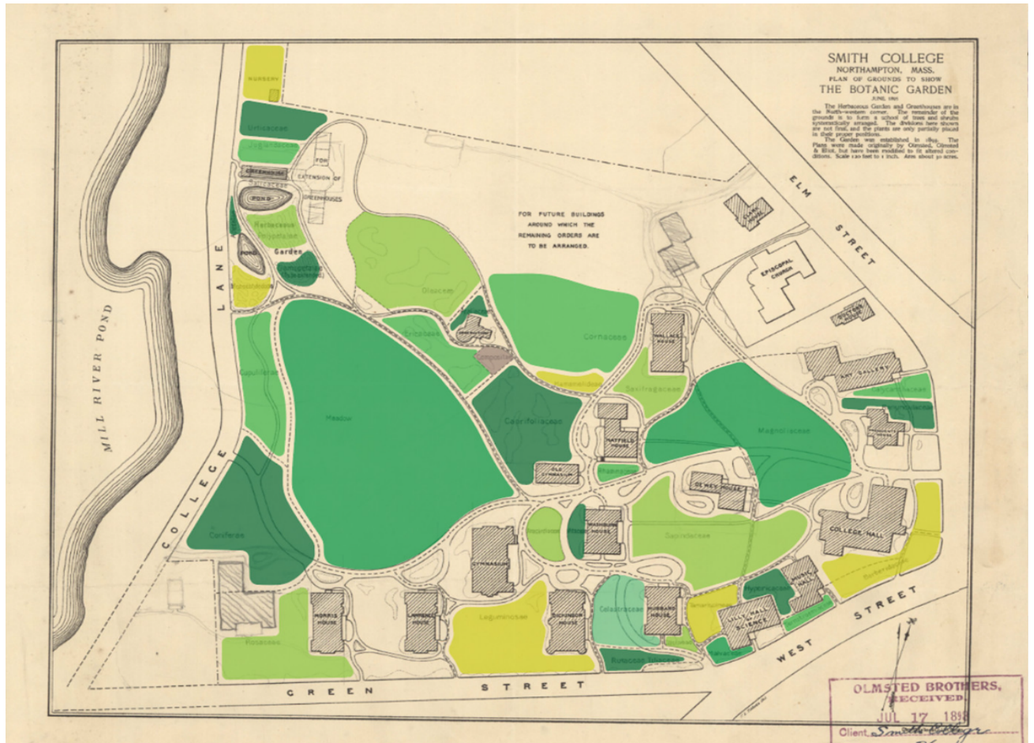
The CUP analysis and recommendations build extensively on the work and suggestions of the 2022 *Landscape Master Plan* (LMP), completed by Mathews Nielson Landscape Architects. Through a collaborative four-year process, the LMP called for Smith's landscapes to be **Inclusive, Educational, Adaptive, and Connected.** The CUP responds to these objectives, envisioning a campus that encourages individual agency, models institutional stewardship, and brings community members closer together.

Structure and Topography

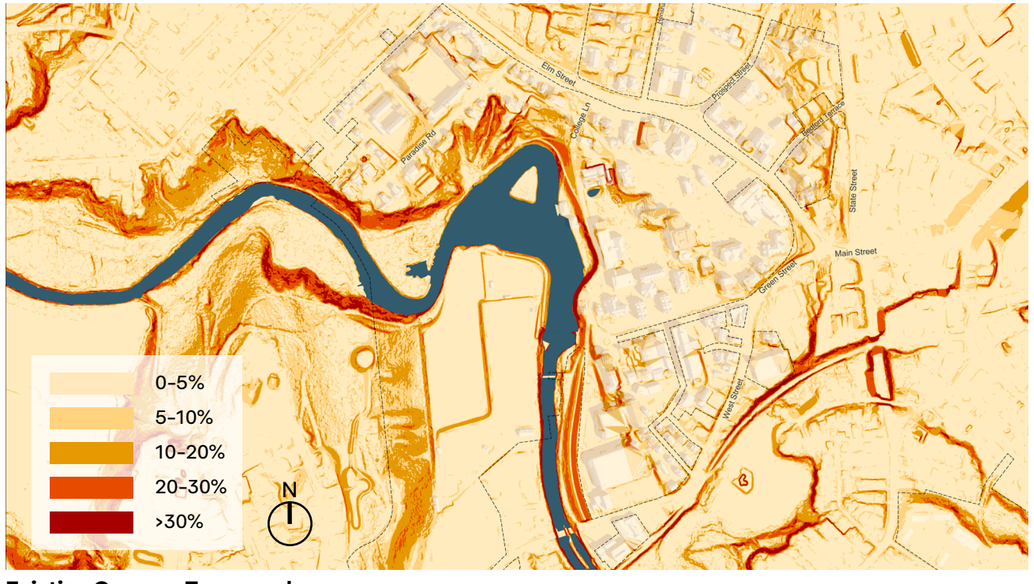
Frederick Law Olmsted Senior's original campus landscape plan has been integral to defining the campus identity and campus structure as a botanic garden composed of distinct planting areas organized by species. His plan foregrounds the experience of moving through nature as one moves across the campus, resulting in a lush arboretum with a remarkably diverse tree canopy. The Mill Riverfront and Paradise Pond remain central natural assets, described as the heart of the campus, offering scenic views and restorative moments. These key natural assets provide a picturesque setting and a tranquil atmosphere to the campus. Long-term planning for the river and dam is increasingly important due to sedimentation and ongoing maintenance needs.

Beloved outdoor spaces include Chapin Lawn, widely regarded as the campus's most lively outdoor space, and as an important setting for community gathering and traditions; the Botanic Garden, a significant community resource, the Neilson Library amphitheater; and the Smith College Woods along the Mill River Trail.

Campus topography presents both advantages and challenges: its slopes offer dramatic overlooks and views, yet also pose barriers to walkability, a topic addressed more fully in the Mobility Framework. The grade change between the riverfront low point and Elm Street high point is approximately 70–80 feet.



Olmsted Brothers Botanic Garden Plan (1898)



Existing Campus Topography

Active and Passive Landscapes

Open Space Use

Olmsted's legacy is rooted in fostering public well-being by connecting people to the natural world. Today, campus open spaces reflect a spectrum of activity levels, from paths around Paradise Pond to the amphitheater at Neilson Library to the respite of Capen Garden. Some spaces, like Mendenhall Courtyard, have no established program and its inaccessibility discourages active use.

The CUP calls for a more intentional balance between active and passive landscapes, creating opportunities for socializing, gathering, group learning, outdoor classrooms, and performance. This balanced approach supports campus wellness and expands the ways in which students and community members can enjoy the outdoors.







Campus Botanic Garden

Smith College's campus encompasses a remarkable mosaic of ecological landscapes shaped by the Mill River, wetlands, meadows, and wooded areas. These environments are cultivated as part of the college's historic commitment to teaching, public education, and ecological stewardship dating back to the founding of the Botanic Garden in 1895. Today, Smith's Botanic Garden holds the highest level of accreditation possible—Level IV—from the Morton Arboretum's ArbNet Accreditation Program. As the CUP advances strategies for more active and connected outdoor spaces, this rich ecological system forms the foundation for enhancing resilience, expanding outdoor learning, and reinforcing Smith's commitment to sustainable land management.

At the heart of this landscape system is the historic Lyman Plant House and the renowned Botanic Garden collections, housing thousands of species across the conservatory and the broader campus arboretum. The Botanic Garden staff play a central role in shaping new ecological landscapes, ensuring design and maintenance reflect scientific rigor, horticultural best practices, and the college's long-standing mission of stewardship. Their involvement in both the Landscape Master Plan and CUP grounds project priorities—such as activating the landscape, deepening campus connectivity, and strengthening the campus's ecological systems—as part of Smith's legacy of environmental leadership.



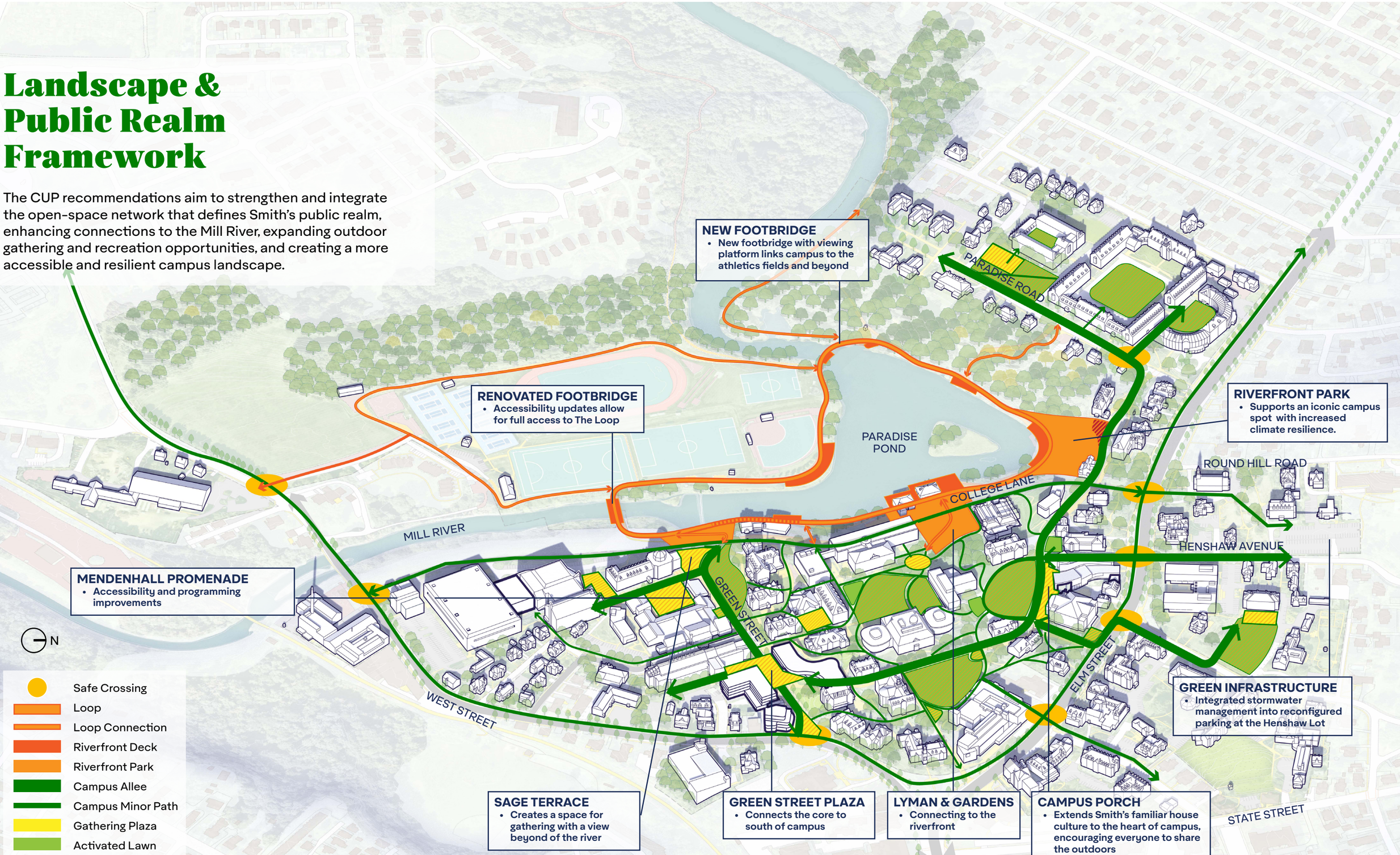
Goals

This might look like...

1. Center the River Celebrate the Mill River as a natural and cultural asset of the campus by capturing curated views, integrating native plantings, improve accessibility and working with the existing topography.	• Developing the Loop as a campus recreational and educational connector. • Constructing a pedestrian bridge at the western edge of Paradise Pond to support the Loop and cross-campus connections.
2. Stitch Together the Landscape Network Link the open space network by following the existing spatial and pathway flow and establishing a clear hierarchy of open spaces along primary desire lines.	• Improving connectivity across Green Street and Elm Street through safer crossings and landscape interventions to extend the boundaries of the campus core. • Re-grading ADA non-compliant pathways to ensure inclusive access.
3. Develop Active and Passive Outdoor Spaces Activate open spaces—especially those along major circulation routes—through thoughtful spatial reconfigurations and the introduction of new programs that support a range of uses.	• Creating active landscapes and quiet ones through both physical interventions and programming. • Promoting use of placemaking strategies as seen in the *Landscape Master Plan.*
4. Improve Resiliency and Stormwater Management Introduce a comprehensive system of stormwater management practices that incorporate permeable paving, integrated bioswales, rain gardens, and detection areas to reduce flood risks and strengthen climate resiliency.	• Defining opportunities to add rain gardens and other green infrastructure that works both with the existing topography and landscape identity. • Incorporating stormwater management strategies into new consolidated parking.

Landscape & Public Realm Framework

The CUP recommendations aim to strengthen and integrate the open-space network that defines Smith's public realm, enhancing connections to the Mill River, expanding outdoor gathering and recreation opportunities, and creating a more accessible and resilient campus landscape.



The Loop

The Loop seeks to provide a fully ADA-compliant path, allowing all members of the Smith community to reach the water's edge and engage with this natural landscape.

Mendenhall Courtyard and Promenade

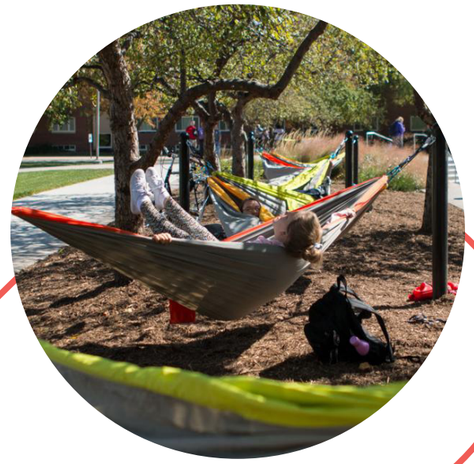
A redesigned Mendenhall Courtyard and a new Promenade will form a connective landscape linking the embodied arts with wellness and recreation. This Promenade ties dance, music, and performance to movement, energy, and community life, while transforming a currently underused and inaccessible area into an inviting space for outdoor performances, fitness classes, and informal gathering. These enhancements will strengthen the connection from the Core to Wellness and Recreation south of Green Street.

Landscape & Public Realm Framework

These examples from peer institutions and comparable projects offer precedents for the recommended spaces within the Landscape & Public Realm Framework.



Community Garden



Hammock Stands



Accessible Pathways



Riverfront Commons



Outdoor Performance



Shared Seating

Mobility & Accessibility Framework

Mobility & Accessibility Framework

Pedestrian, vehicular, service, and transit modes of circulation together define the mobility framework. Wayfinding and accessibility systems inform the navigability of this network.

Key Findings

Campus Pathways and Pedestrian-Vehicular Crossings

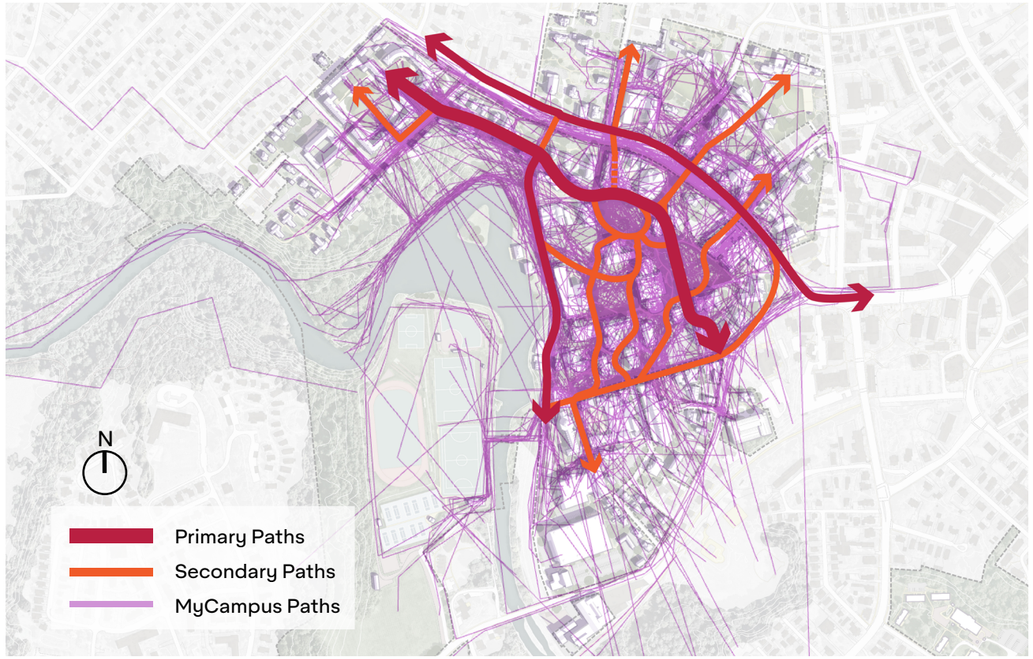
The pedestrian pathway system is characterized by a web of multi-use routes that link campus open spaces and key building destinations. In the online MyCampus Survey, pedestrian routes were mapped, showing that this web has no clear hierarchy—many paths lead to the campus heart at Chapin Lawn, with strong pedestrian traffic shown along College Lane and Elm Street, with connections to the Quad. Green Street and Elm Street are key vehicular barriers that are challenging to cross.

Though the Campus Core is very walkable, stakeholders noted troubles with navigation and orientation upon arrival. In addition to improving crossings and permeability across Elm Street and Green Street, the CUP discussions also surfaced requests for improved access to the athletic fields. In certain areas of campus, such as the path behind Wright Hall, walkability is also challenged by steeply graded slopes.

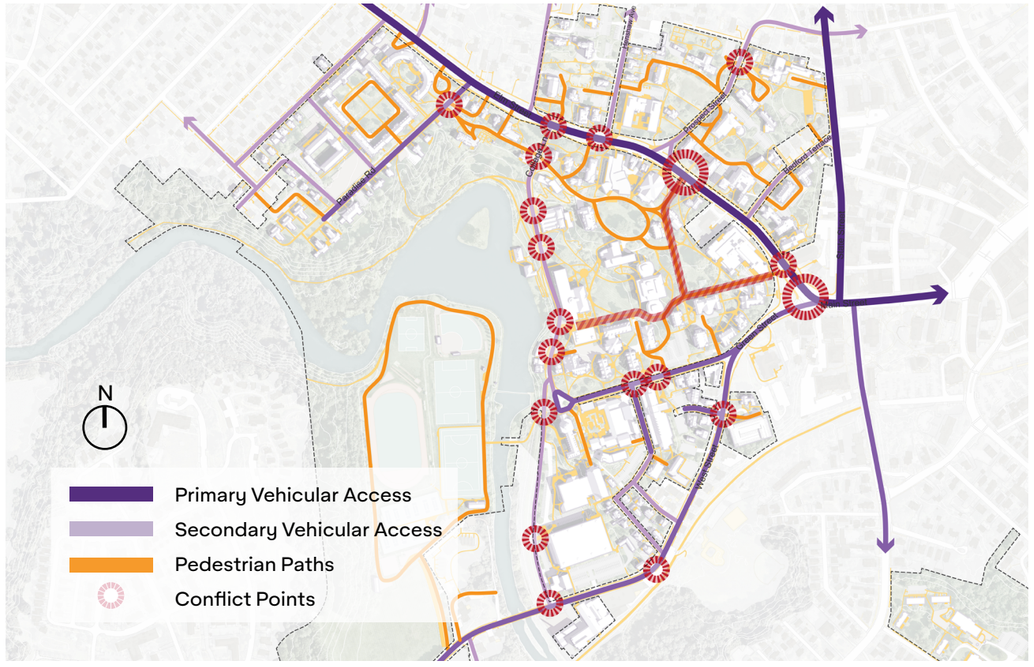
Vehicular and pedestrian conflict areas introduce additional challenges to the walkability of the campus. Shared vehicular and pedestrian paths occur especially at the Campus Core, where service vehicles and cars accessing distributed parking cross major pedestrian paths. Additionally, there are no separated bike paths, increasing the shared use of campus paths. Little oversight or management of these shared paths is apparent, with conflict zones resulting.

Local Mobility Options

While Smith community members can traverse campus on foot or by bike, many people arrive by public transport or in personal vehicles. The college encourages sustainable transit options whenever possible. The campus is served by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) bus system, which notably provides connections to UMass Amherst and Amherst College on the B43, and Mount Holyoke College on the 39E. All students, staff, and faculty with valid Smith IDs can ride the PVTA free of charge during the academic year. The ValleyBike bikeshare network has a station outside of John M. Greene Hall, but availability of bikes has been unreliable in recent years. For those driving, Smith encourages carpooling and offers Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations in two campus lots, by Ford Hall and behind the Indoor Track and Tennis Facility.



Primary Pedestrian Routes



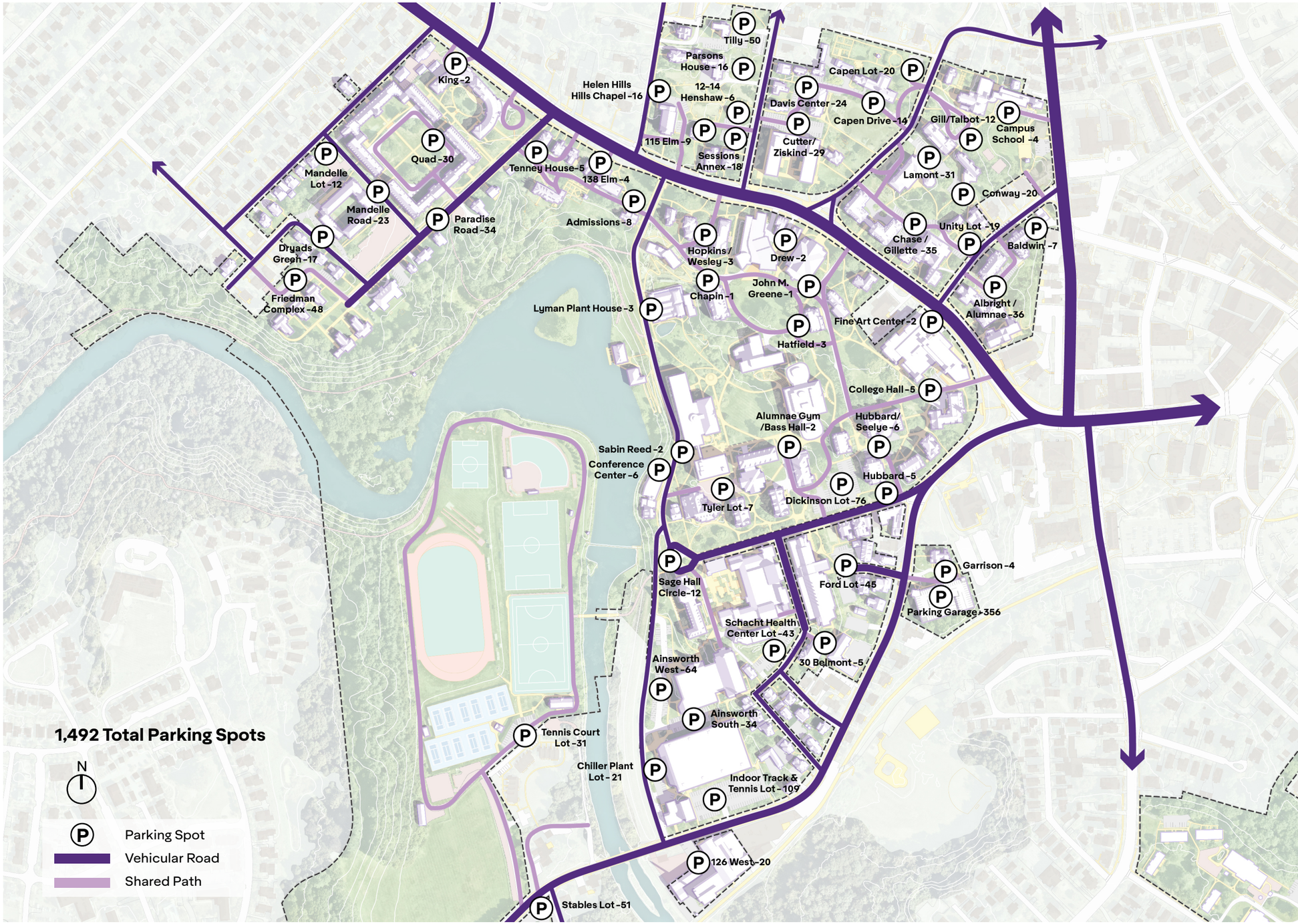
Pedestrian and Vehicular Conflict

Campus Parking

There are 1,492 parking spaces distributed across 60 campus parking areas supporting students, faculty, staff, visitors, service parking, rentals, as well as accessible parking (discussed further below). Reports from operations staff suggest that the number of spaces meets demand, but it is not always where parking is desired. A parking garage located on West Street has 356 spaces serving staff (183), students (148), visitors (10), and rentals (5). Eight accessible spaces are identified at this garage, but this should be reviewed relative to ADA and 521 CMR to confirm compliance. The second largest parking lot is the Indoor Track and Tennis (ITT) Facility lot on West Street with 109 spaces. Both lots lie to the southwestern region of campus and do not clearly lead to the Campus Core.

Parking requests are registered and spots for visitors, students, staff, and accessible spaces are marked, but parking is not assigned, often resulting in a daily circling to find a parking spot. Public metered on-street parking is available for a fee on city streets. Electric vehicle (EV) charging stations are located on campus in the Ford Hall parking lot and the ITT parking lot, both south of Green Street.

The distributed model of parking, coupled with limited signage, makes navigation of parking very challenging, especially for visitors to campus.



Accessibility Overview

Concerns about campus accessibility came up at virtually every kickoff listening session, with concerns echoed throughout the engagement process, indicating that mobility challenges exist across campus buildings and pathways. KMA, an architecture and accessibility consultant, partnered with Sasaki Associates and conducted both pathway assessments and high-priority building assessments (Smith identified 34 buildings to assess). Note that the full accessibility package is included in *Volume 2: Appendix.*



Non-ADA Compliant Ramp behind Wright



Stair Access to Ainsworth

Existing Accessible Pathways

KMA prepared a Smith College Accessibility Campus Map to visually represent campus-wide accessibility features and conditions related to physical mobility. This map is intended to complement the accessibility audits conducted across 34 campus buildings and to aid planning and decision-making for access improvements within the CUP effort.

KMA generated a comprehensive visual layer that identifies:

- Running slopes along walkways.
- Ramp locations and accessibility level.
- Stair locations.
- Areas with non-compliant ground surface material.
- Locations of designated accessible parking.
- Location of accessible and non-accessible entrances.

Gaps in a comprehensive accessibility web exist as noted on KMA's Existing Campus Accessibility Map. Key identified gaps include paths leading to Ainsworth-Scott, the athletic fields, the riverfront, and to Lilly, Hillyer, and College Halls. Inaccessible building entrances are also called out on the map.

Existing Campus Accessibility Map (KMA)



RAMP	WALKWAY	ENTRANCE	CROSSWALKS	GROUND SURFACE	STAIR
Running Slope 8.3%	Running Slope <5%	Accessible (Automatic) / Accessible	Accessible	Deteriorating/Crumbling Surface	Stair Location
Running Slope 8.3%-12%	Running Slope 5%-8.3%	Relatively Accessible (Automatic) / Relatively Accessible	Relatively Accessible		
Running Slope >12%	Running Slope 8.3%	Inaccessible (Automatic) / Inaccessible	Inaccessible		

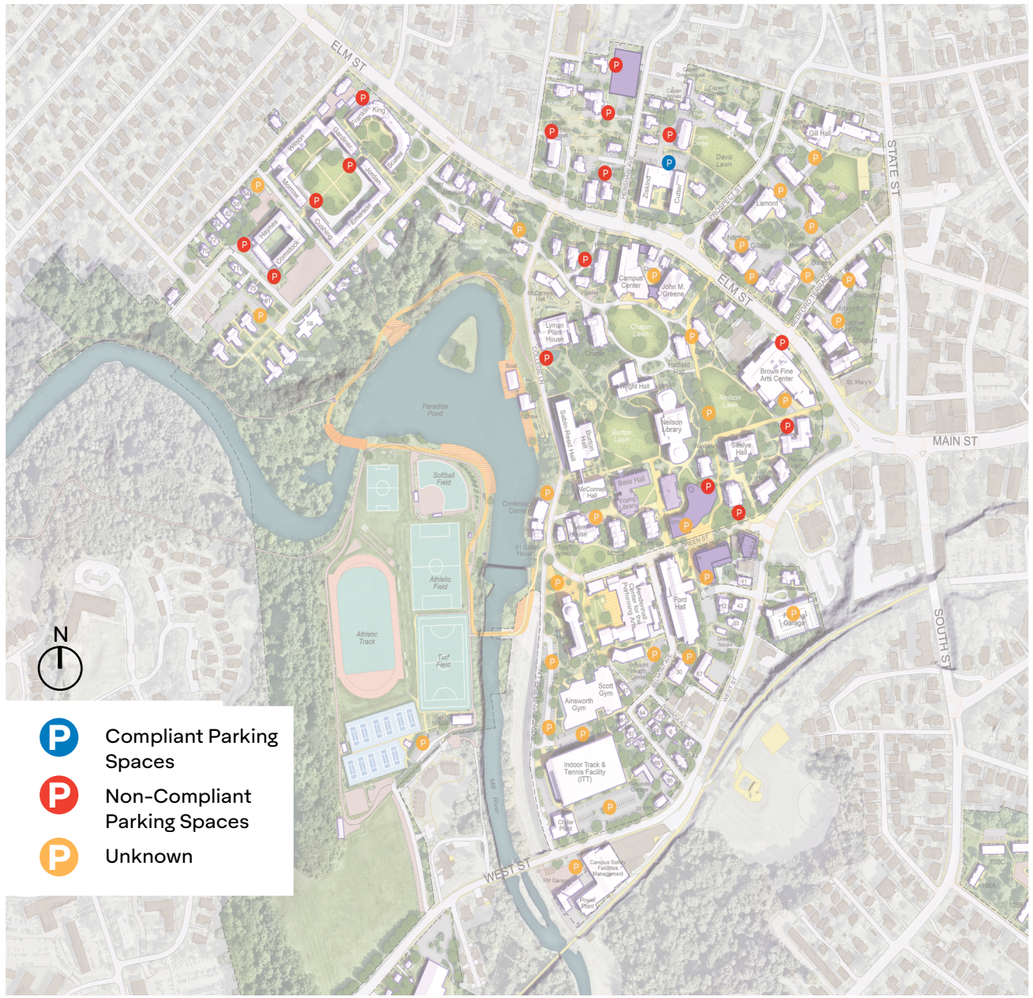
Accessible Parking

According to Smith parking data, there are 74 accessible parking spaces distributed across campus. KMA's review of identified accessible spaces indicated a lack of full compliance. Concerns with signage, markings, adequate sizing, clearances, and slope were noted. These accessible spaces should be studied more fully, as part of a CUP recommended comprehensive transit and parking study.

On-Campus Mobility

For those that require additional support navigating the campus internally, Smith offers an on-demand Access Van operated by Campus Safety and student drivers. Those in need of regular transport can request approval for Access Van usage through the Accessibility Resource Center.

Existing Accessible Parking (KMA)



Buildings Accessibility Assessment

As part of the CUP, accessibility assessments of 34 high priority buildings were completed. A matrix of findings was completed, along with individual building sheets summarizing degrees of compliance for categories that included building entrances, elevators, restrooms, signage, with an overall accessibility rating (substantially accessible, partially accessible, largely inaccessible) assigned to each building reviewed. As is common with historic campuses, many campus buildings were constructed before current accessibility standards were established and, while they remain legally compliant under existing provisions, they do not meet today's expectations for accessibility.

Overall Findings:

- Most audited buildings have at least one accessible entrance.
- Some door issues include: lack of maneuvering clearances, inaccessible hardware, and high thresholds.
- Signs are occasionally mounted at the wrong locations/heights.
- Toilet rooms sometimes have insufficient footprints, complying with ADA requirements, but not 521 CMR requirements
- Some auditoriums lack accessible interior routes, stair handrails, companion seating, and suggested aisle seating
- Some stairs have handrail issues.
- Drinking fountains are not always compliant
- Some labs lack compliant sinks and emergency showers.

Building Accessibility Matrix (KMA)

	Admission	Bass Hall	Brown Fine Arts	Burton Hall	Campus Center	Clark Hall	College Hall	Davis Center	DTI	Ford Hall	Hatfield Hall	HHH Chapel	John M. Greene	Lyman Plant House	McConnell Hall	Mendenhall	Museum of Art	Sabin-Reed Hall	Seelye Hall	Tilly Hall	Wright Hall	Baldwin House	Capen House	Chase House	Conway House	Duckett House	Emerson House	Jordan House	Lee House	Northrop House	Scales House	Sessions House	Talbot House	Tyler House
Entrances	♿	♿	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶
Emergency Egress	♿	♿	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶
Interior Route	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	♿	♿
Signage	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	♿	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶
Toilet Rooms	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	n/a	🚶	🚶
Parking	-	n/a	♿	n/a	n/a	n/a	♿	🚶	n/a	n/a	n/a	🚶	n/a	♿	n/a	n/a	♿	n/a	n/a	♿	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Auditorium/Lecture Hall	n/a	n/a	♿	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	🚶	n/a	n/a	🚶	n/a	n/a	🚶	n/a	🚶	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Classrooms/Labs/Meeting	n/a	♿	🚶	♿	🚶	n/a	🚶	n/a	🚶	🚶	🚶	n/a	n/a	🚶	♿	n/a	♿	♿	🚶	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Kitchenettes	🚶	🚶	n/a	n/a	🚶	🚶	♿	n/a	♿	🚶	n/a	♿	n/a	n/a	n/a	🚶	🚶	n/a	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶
Dorm Rooms	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿
Bathing Rooms	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶
Laundry Rooms	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	n/a	♿	n/a	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿
Common Use Spaces	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	♿	♿	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	♿	♿	♿
Other	n/a	🚶	♿	n/a	🚶	n/a	🚶	🚶	🚶	n/a	🚶	🚶	n/a	n/a	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall Score	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	♿	♿	♿	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶	🚶

♿ Substantially Accessible 🚶 Partially Accessible ♿ Largely Inaccessible

MAY 2025

Wayfinding

Wayfinding at Smith is often challenging because the campus lacks a clear, consistent signage and navigation strategy. Campus maps are limited, buildings are not always clearly identified on their exteriors, and the network of winding paths offers multiple routes to the same destinations, making orientation difficult—especially for first-time visitors. At the campus scale, it can be hard to know where to park or where to enter the campus. While College Hall serves as a strong ceremonial gateway, more practical entry points are less legible. Because the circulation system functions more like a web than a set of clear spines, navigating campus often depends on recognizing and orienting oneself around signature buildings and public spaces. Expanded and more consistent wayfinding—through improved signage, maps, and digital tools at both the campus and building scale—would significantly improve navigation and the overall campus experience.



Signage at SCMA



Signage at Green Street



Campus Map

Goals

This might look like...

1. Stitch Together the Campus

Improve pathways across Smith to bridge barriers and enhance campus connections and crossings.

- Expanding the Campus Core through landscaping and development along and across Green Street.
- Connecting the campus to the water and broader athletics resources through an accessible riverfront Loop and pedestrian bridge across the Mill River.

2. Develop a Comprehensive Mobility Strategy

Focus on ensuring safer and sustainable mobility for all modes of circulation: pedestrians, bikes, vehicles, parking and bus systems.

- Prioritizing the pedestrian experience by considering traffic calming initiatives, crossings updates, and a potential consolidation of some parking to the perimeter, while maintaining accessibility and operational efficiency.
- Enhancing signage and lighting to make it easier to navigate the campus.

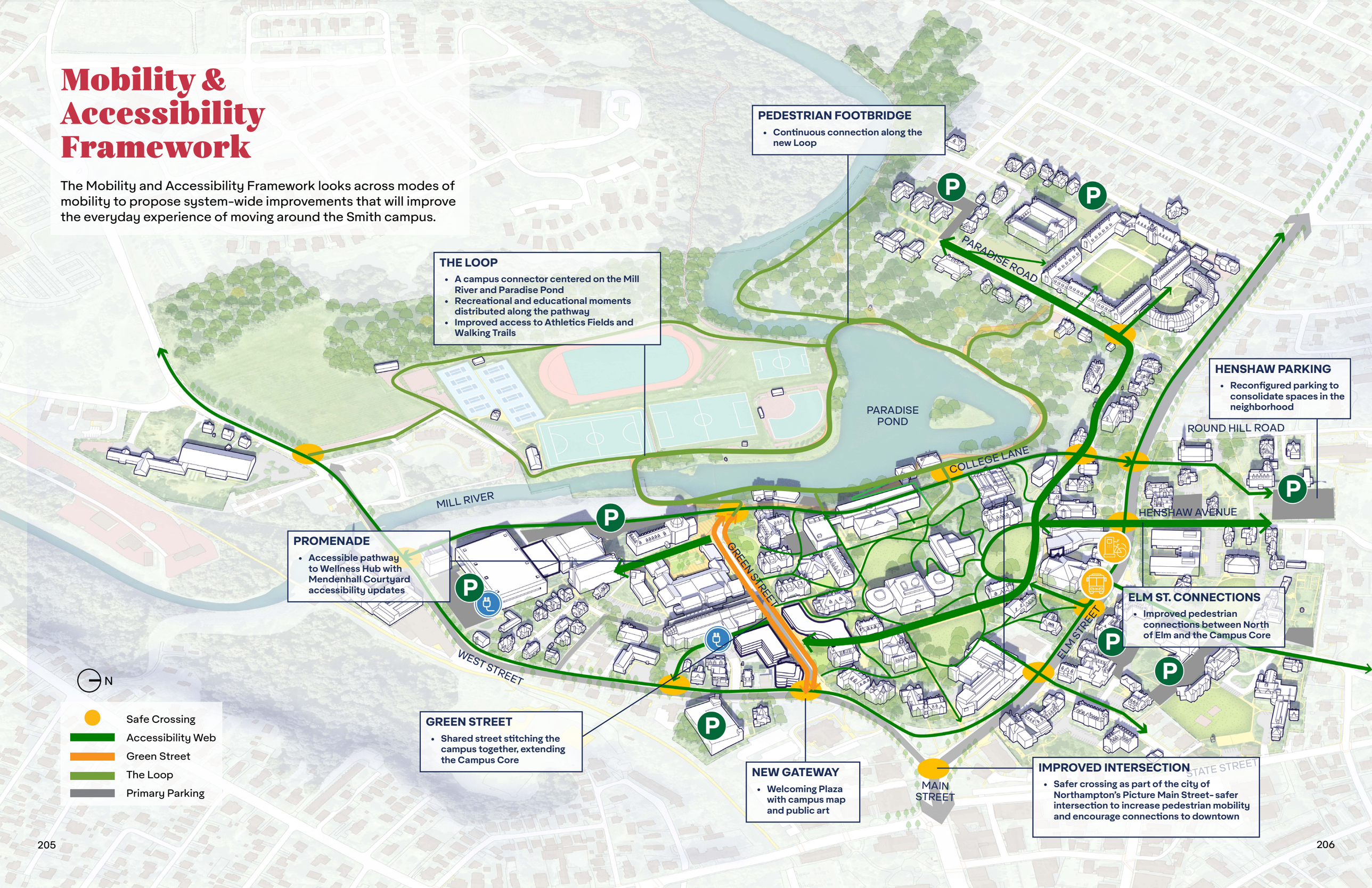
3. Prioritize Accessibility Upgrades

Minimize barriers to create more inclusive and accessible spaces and mobility systems; address compliance gaps in buildings, exterior pathways, and parking.

- Implementing accessibility updates across campus, both at the building scale and the campus pathway scale.
- Conducting a housing accessibility study to ensure renewal efforts respond to access needs.

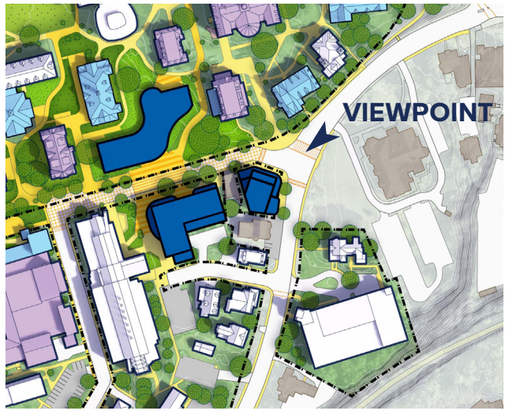
Mobility & Accessibility Framework

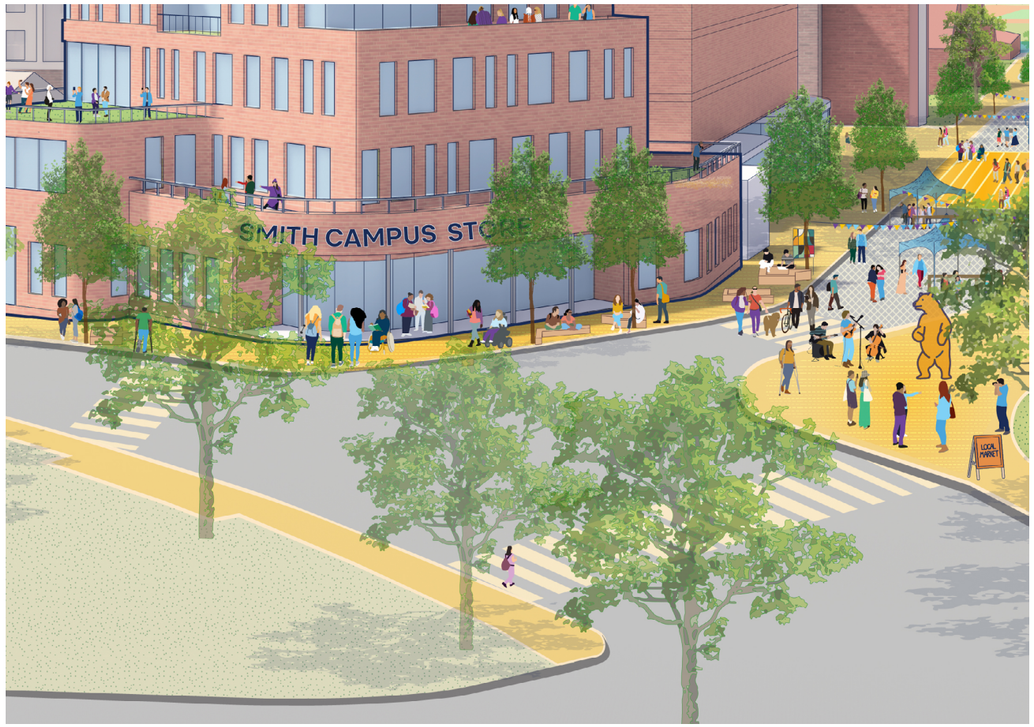
The Mobility and Accessibility Framework looks across modes of mobility to propose system-wide improvements that will improve the everyday experience of moving around the Smith campus.



A New Gateway

A new campus gateway is suggested at the intersection of Green Street and West Street, with improved crosswalks to improve pedestrian safety; also at this gateway, a traffic calming shift is introduced with a perpendicular entry recommended for vehicular traffic to Green Street from West Street. With this shift, a Green Street plaza is created and defined as a welcoming urban gesture and an improved safety device. A new gateway building is recommended opposite this plaza, with an expanded campus store, admissions office, and administrative space proposed.





Crossing at Green Street and West Street

Improved Crossing and Connections at Elm Street

Elm Street is a busy regional street that separates the campus core from residential, administrative, and campus life functions that lie north of Elm. Improved connections across Elm Street are suggested with raised crosswalks to slow traffic and improved sidewalks and traffic controls. The strengthening of campus pathways to designated crossing areas through these measures will improve connectivity by stitching the campus together into a safe and accessible network. Throughout these efforts, coordination with the City of Northampton will be necessary to improve crossings and align with city initiatives like *Picture Main Street*.





New Signaling



Raised Crossings

Sustainability & Infrastructure Framework

Sustainability & Infrastructure Framework

The Sustainability and Infrastructure Framework integrates initiatives that steward, sustain, and modernize Smith's buildings and infrastructure—strengthening long-term performance of the built environment while advancing the college's commitments to environmental and climate action.

Climate change is a defining challenge that will extend well beyond Smith's 2030 net-neutrality goal. The Sustainability and Infrastructure framework establishes a long-term framework that enables Smith to sustain and deepen its work in emissions reduction, energy and waste efficiency, and sustainable practices, while advancing an equitable and just future. The framework supports Smith's mission by linking stewardship of the built environment with environmental and climate literacy and action in preparing students for leadership and impact.

Sustainable infrastructure is understood as equal parts stewardship and design. Informed by broad engagement across the campus community, the CUP develops a framework to synthesize energy systems, operations, landscapes, and healthy materials into a coherent system aligned with a plan for the physical transformation of the Smith campus.

Within this framework, investments in geothermal energy, electrification, and high-performance buildings are coupled with strategies that enhance thermal comfort, reduce resource demand, and bolster the campus to adapt to increasingly changeable climate conditions. Equally central is the understanding that sustainable infrastructure must serve people as fully as it serves the planet. The CUP advances healthy, inclusive environments that support wellbeing, accessibility, and equitable use, while mobility systems are designed to privilege walking, cycling, and transit. Landscapes are treated as vital infrastructure in their own right, performing ecological functions such as stormwater management and habitat restoration while also serving as places of inquiry, recreation, and respite.

Taken together, these strategies cultivate a culture of sustainability that is woven into daily operations, academics, and community life. Through shared metrics, evaluation, and partnerships that extend beyond the campus boundary, Smith can advance a model of sustainable infrastructure that reflects its continued environmental leadership.

The Sustainability Framework builds on Smith's existing strengths and proposes sustainability ventures that extend from energy to operational carbon to water and waste reductions and beyond. The sustainability focus is also expressed in several overlapping Frameworks, including Landscape & Public Realm goals for habitat restoration and nature-based storm water management, and the Mobility & Accessibility Framework including active mobility and support of local and regional public transit.



Key Findings

Environmental Leadership

Smith College is recognized for its environmental leadership with its "Commitment to Zero" district energy transition and the related goal targeting carbon neutrality by 2030. CUP analysis of sustainability at Smith began with a review of earlier Sustainability Plans, Studies and Projects including:

- 2010 - *Sustainability and Climate Action Management Plan* (SCAMP)
- 2017 - *Report of the Smith College Study Group on Climate Change*
- 2020 - *District Energy Master Plan*
- 2022 - *Landscape Master Plan*
- 2025 - *Compass 2035*
- Since 2000 - Investment in Energy Conservation Measures in Existing Buildings
- Since 2021 - Purchase of Renewably Resourced Electricity (New England College Renewable Partnership)
- 2022-2027 - Geothermal Energy Project Implementation (reducing carbon emissions by 80%)

CUP discussions with students, staff, faculty members, and board members reinforced the importance that CUP recommendations build on past and current sustainability initiatives and that an emphasis be placed on maximizing use of existing facilities, renewing and repurposing current Smith physical resources, with minimal new construction proposed. Where new construction is proposed, the CUP proposes balance with energy-saving renovations to support net zero carbon goals.

Building Certifications

Smith College has multiple LEED-certified buildings, including the Neilson Library (LEED Gold) and the Bechtel Environmental Classroom (Living Building Certified), adhering to LEED standards for most new construction since 2008 and focusing on energy efficiency across its building portfolio. The recently completed McCartney Hall (2025) incorporates responsibly sourced mass timber, glass, and stone into its structure, with geothermal energy powering its heating and cooling systems and a living roof that is planted with 870 square feet of native species. This new building is a testament to Smith's commitment to sustainable construction and meets LEED Gold and WELL Building Standards.

Research and Education

Following a Campus As Classroom model, Smith and its environs are a living, learning environment—where buildings, landscapes, infrastructure, and operations become tools for teaching, research, and discovery. The off-campus MacLeish Field Station and its Bechtel Environmental Classroom is Living Building certified and a signature Smith resource for field research, artistic inquiry, recreation, and outdoor education. The Lyman Plant House exhibits valuable plant collections from across the world and is an academic and research resource on campus.

Neilson Library



Bechtel Environmental Classroom



McCartney Hall



Embedding Sustainability in All Campus Systems

Sustainability efforts across the institution currently reflect strong initiative within individual departments and business units, demonstrating meaningful local engagement and innovation. At the same time, the decentralized nature of these efforts presents a valuable opportunity to strengthen alignment, increase visibility, and create greater operational clarity. Developing a comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan that formally codifies the 4P's framework—***Place, Practice, Pathways, and Purpose***—would provide a shared structure to coordinate initiatives, scale best practices, and advance a cohesive, campus-wide approach to sustainability.



Key Takeaways from Sustainability Engagement

During the engagement phase, these sustainability themes consistently emerged as shared priorities across departments, reflecting a collective focus on the built environment as a critical lever for climate action and institutional resilience. Faculty, staff, students, and operational leaders emphasized the need to decarbonize campus energy systems, improve resource efficiency, design for climate adaptation, and foster healthier, more inclusive spaces—while also advancing sustainable mobility, adaptive reuse, ecological regeneration, and waste reduction. Together, these priorities highlight a strong campus-wide alignment around integrating sustainability into planning, design, and daily operations to address climate impacts holistically and strategically.

Decarbonize Campus Energy	Design for Climate Adaptation & Resilience
Advance Sustainable Mobility	Prioritize Adaptive Reuse Over New Construction
Optimize Space Through Reuse & Right-Sizing	Foster Healthy, Inclusive Building
Build a Culture of Monitoring & Evaluation	Protect and Regenerate Ecological Systems
Improve Resource Efficiency & Circular Waste Systems	Design a Sustainable Dining Model & Reduce Food Waste

2020 District Energy Master Plan

The CUP reviewed the *District Energy Master Plan* (2020) and its implementation in three district energy loops. This report's diagrams demonstrate building conversions from steam to hot water heating, and chilled water for cooling. The CUP team then verified that the district energy system has the capacity to accommodate the proposed CUP development, given the adoption of recommendations for a net-zero load growth policy.

- Currently Connected to Central Chilled Water System
- Proposed Future Connection to Central Chilled Water System
- Currently Partially Connected to Central Chilled Water System
- Proposed Future Partial Connection to Central Chilled Water System
- Currently Partially Connected & Proposed Future Connection to Central Chilled Water System

District Energy - Cooling



- Type A: Replace Steam Equipment & Revise All HW Distribution Equipment
- Type B: Replace Steam Equipment & Revise Some HW Distribution Equipment
- Type C: Replace Steam Equipment & HW Distribution Equipment
- Type D: Replace All Steam Equipment & Steam Piping
- Type E: Major Renovation

District Energy - Heating



Goals

This might look like...

Goals	This might look like...
1. Environmental and Fiscal Stewardship Prioritize adaptive reuse, right-sizing, and lifecycle-based decisions to extend asset value, reduce capital and operating costs, and align investments with evolving academic and community needs. Advance climate adaptation and resilience through efficient building systems, energy management, and practices that strengthen long-term financial health and environmental performance.	• Renewing and repurposing existing physical resources to support evolving campus priorities. • Advancing carbon neutrality goals, embracing district and distributed energy strategies, adding photovoltaic arrays where feasible, investigating battery and thermal energy storage systems to reduce peak loads and demand charges, and embracing district and distributed energy strategies.
2. Sustainable Operations Center sustainability as a foundational principle of campus operations including mobility, waste reduction, land use decisions and resource conservation. Integrate these values into the proposed Sustainable Design Guidelines.	• Meeting the college's 100% renewable electricity goal with onsite as well as existing offsite renewable electricity generation. • Embedding sustainability into procurement, governance, and daily operational decision-making. • Continuing to add EV charging stations, and converting to an electric service fleet.
3. Monitoring & Evaluation Establish a clear, transparent system for monitoring and evaluating sustainability and infrastructure performance, using data, research, and campus engagement to track progress, inform decisions, and continuously improve outcomes.	• Leveraging sustainability dashboard and metrics for deeper insights, leading to actions. • Develop a coordinated set of indicators, targets, and reporting cycles to assess progress on sustainability, climate, and infrastructure goals and guide investment and operational decisions. • Use the campus as a classroom by linking monitoring and evaluation efforts to teaching, research, and applied learning in areas such as climate justice, food systems, and economics.

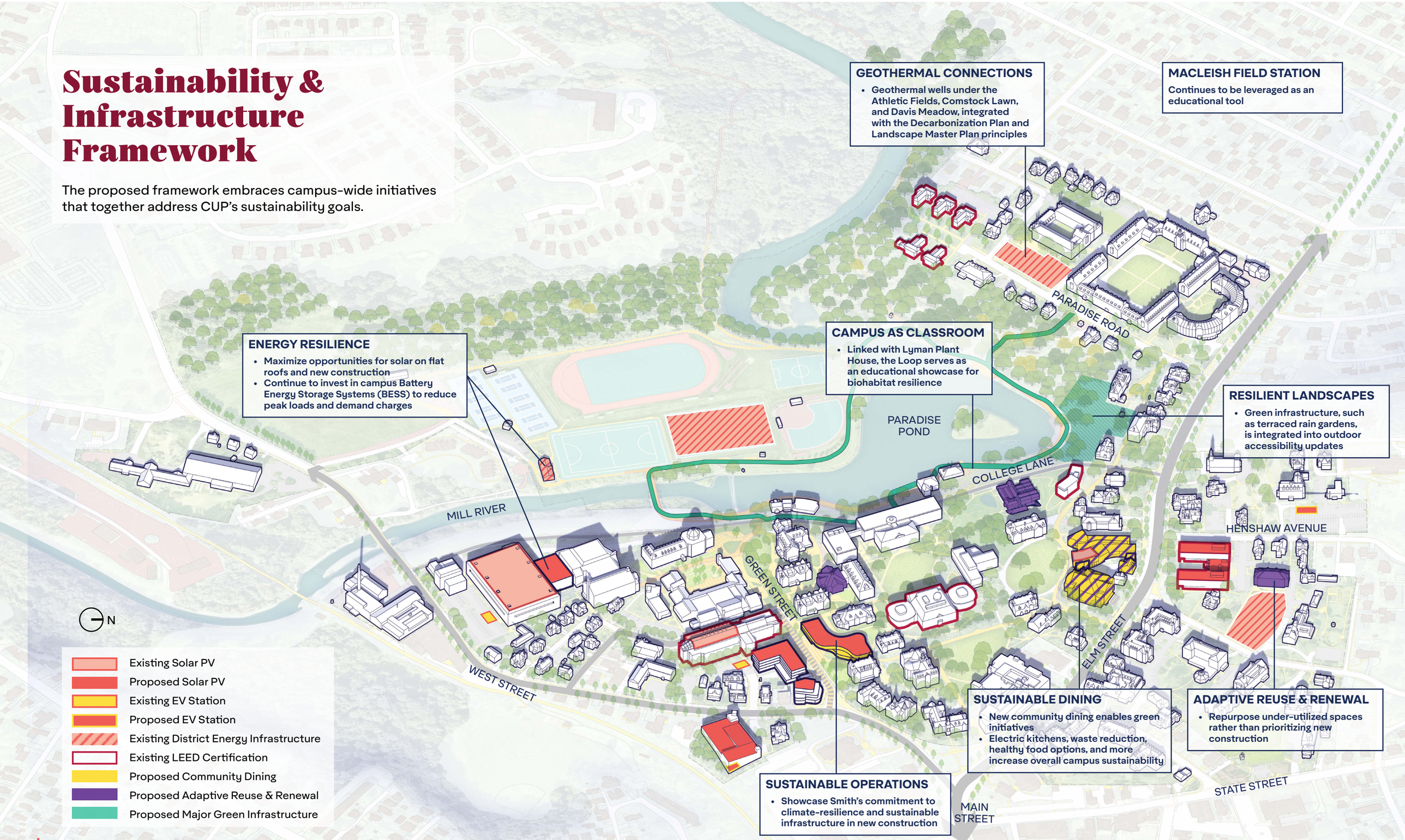
Goals

This might look like...

Goals	This might look like...
4. Sustainable Dining Implement a dining system that advances Smith's sustainability goals while building community, improving access and equity, and reducing the environmental footprint of campus food operations.	• Invest in a more efficient dining system to reduce energy use and expand access to sustainable food. • Reduce waste across the dining system through production, purchasing, and composting. • Decarbonize campus kitchens by electrifying major and satellite venues and phasing out fossil fuels.
5. Resilient Landscapes Design climate-adaptive landscapes as green infrastructure that support learning, biodiversity, and inclusive cultural systems while enhancing habitat, managing stormwater, sequestering carbon, and strengthening resilience to flooding, erosion, and extreme weather.	• Using existing and new landscapes, like The Loop, as opportunities to understand resilience, hydrology, ecological habitat, flood control, and historic uses of the land. • Designing rain gardens and improving permeability of pathways and parking areas to improve campus stormwater management.
6. Climate Justice Support local and regional sustainability initiatives for shared resilience in stormwater management, transportation, and active mobility, while evaluating the role of campus infrastructure during extreme weather events.	• Integrating the Loop with public local and regional path networks. • Advocating for use of community public transportation. • Investigating climate reduction strategies that prioritize climate justice and equity to achieve Smith's goal of carbon neutrality, as a possible alternative to traditional offsets.

Sustainability & Infrastructure Framework

The proposed framework embraces campus-wide initiatives that together address CUP's sustainability goals.



Follow-up Studies and Guidelines

In order to further develop CUP sustainability and infrastructure recommendations outlined above, the following additional studies and guidelines are suggested:

1. Sustainable Design Guidelines, Future Study

Create guidelines for new construction and existing building renovation, emphasizing all-electric systems, energy conservation measures, insulation and air sealing, commercial kitchen electrification and commissioning. Guidelines for all campus projects should include Smith targets for sustainability certifications, including Passive House, Living Building Challenge and Core, Net-Zero Energy, Zero Carbon, WELL, and LEED v5. Guidelines should also outline sustainable material selection criteria:

- Planet health: embodied carbon emissions from material life
- Occupant health: health product declarations
- Community health: climate justice criteria, e.g. Design for Freedom

2. Sustainable Dining, Continued Study

The 2020 Bergmeyer food systems study recommended reimagining dining operations into two to three community-based dining spaces as a strategy to improve efficiency, sustainability, and the student experience. The CUP builds on this foundation, extending that work by incorporating insights from CUP stakeholder engagement and reflecting post-pandemic shifts in dining patterns, labor conditions, supply chains, and community needs. As a potential next area of study following the CUP, Smith should further refine this analysis by integrating updated operational and experiential data to explore how campus food systems can continue to advance sustainability goals, strengthen resilience, and support community wellbeing and belonging.

3. Sustainability Action Planning, Continued Study

Develop a comprehensive Sustainability Action Plan to guide Smith's environmental, climate, and infrastructure efforts and translate institutional commitments into clear, measurable action. Building on the CUP, the Sustainability Action Plan would align operational and academic priorities with capital planning and day-to-day decision-making, ensuring that sustainability goals are embedded across the institution.

The plan would establish clear goals, identify priority actions, define metrics and timelines, and set out responsibilities for implementation and ongoing coordination. It would also include regular processes for tracking progress, evaluating outcomes, and updating strategies over time to support accountability and continuous improvement. Through this work, Smith can translate CUP strategies into a practical, institution-wide roadmap that guides investment and advances a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable future.

4. Sustainable Transit and Parking Planning, Future Study

Review sustainable mobility options including consolidated parking - surface lots and garages, fees for parking, incentives for ride sharing, EVs and cycling support. This study should be part of a comprehensive Campus Transportation and Parking Plan.

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Recommendations

Alignment with Compass 2035

The CUP is a flexible roadmap for campus development over the next ten-plus years and serves as the physical expression of *Compass 2035*.

This plan translates Smith's strategic priorities for discovery, belonging, leadership, and institutional sustainability into long-term decisions about buildings, landscapes, and infrastructure by aligning the college's academic mission with the future vision of the campus.

Compass 2035 Goals:

Academic Experience

Goal 1: Inspire and support academic excellence, exploration, and discovery.

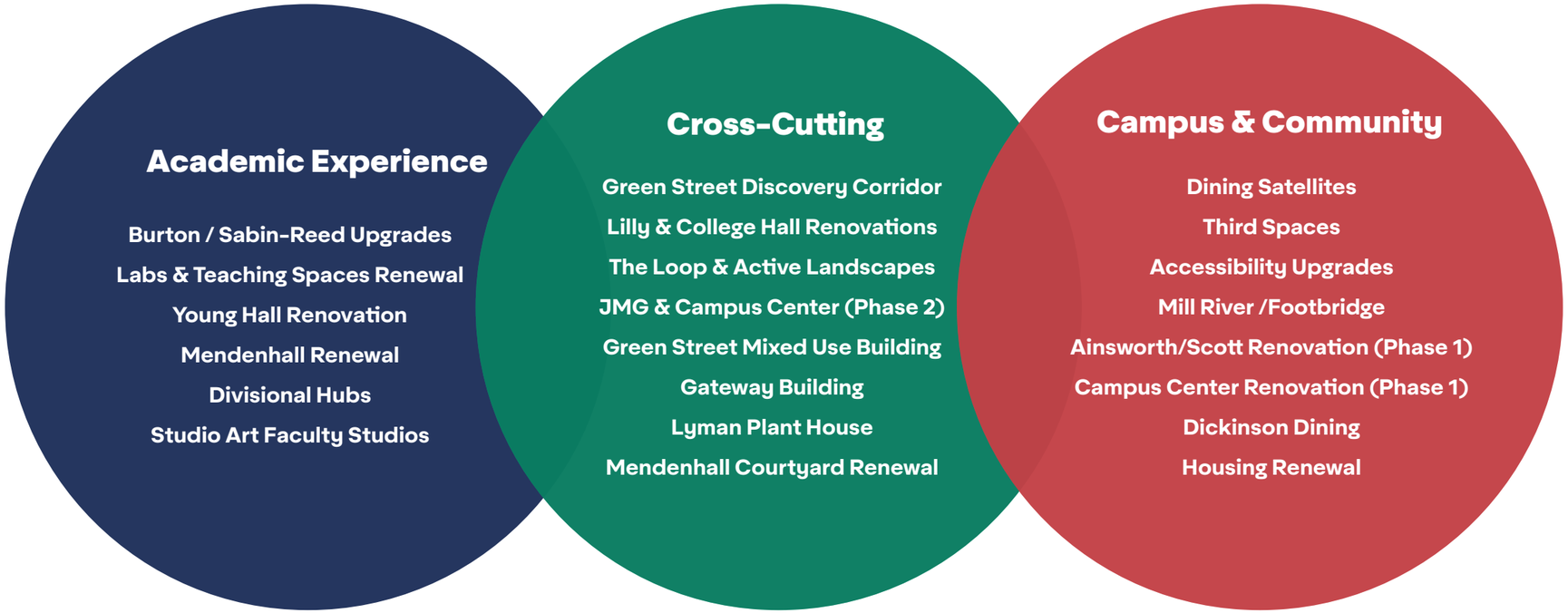
Goal 2: Prepare students for fulfilling careers and a lifetime of leadership.

Campus & Community

Goal 3: Foster well-being, belonging, and resilience across our community.

Goal 4: Strengthen institutional sustainability to ensure the college's enduring contributions to the world.

Alignment of Recommended Projects



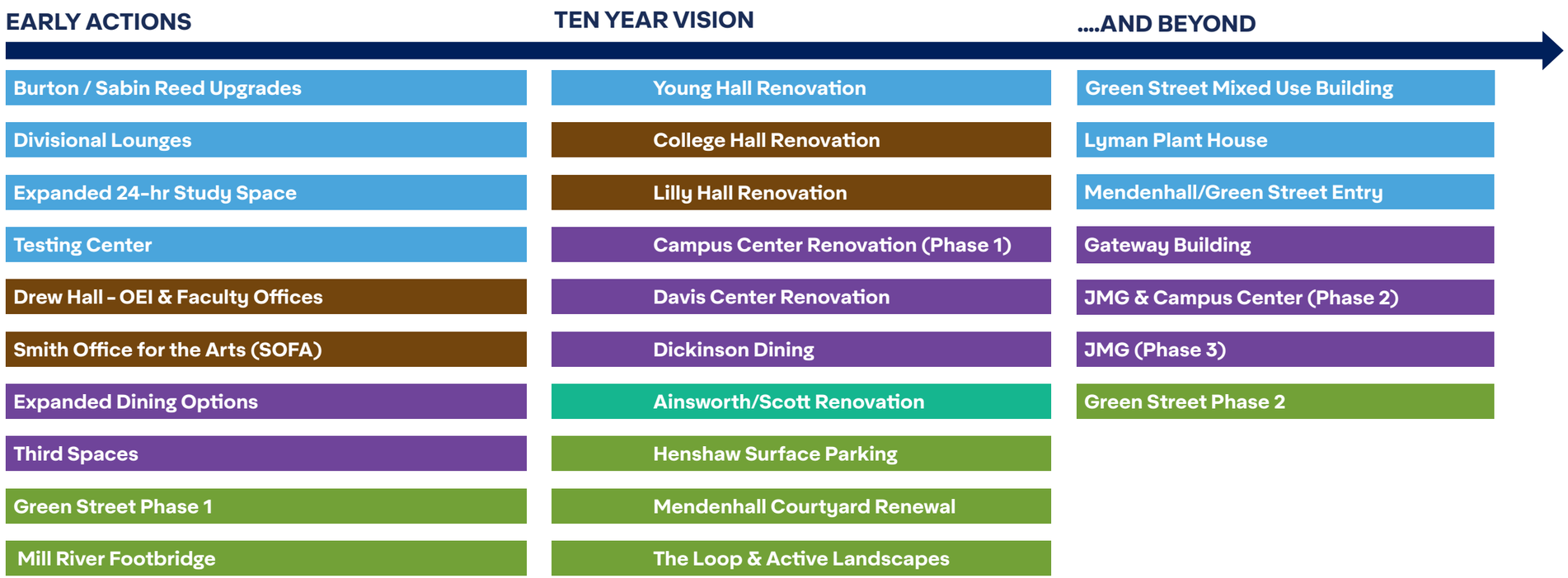
Phasing Strategy

The following is a flexible phasing strategy, designed to adapt to Smith's ever-evolving needs.

The plan articulates an inspiring yet implementable vision, offering optionality in how that vision is advanced rather than prescribing a fixed sequence or timeline. Implementation will depend on funding, capital planning, and evolving priorities, with further study of recommendations informed by continued dialogue and engagement with the Smith community. The CUP builds on decades of prior planning and investment, integrating existing studies, sustainability initiatives, and capital efforts into a cohesive framework rather than starting anew.

At the same time, the plan identifies actionable opportunities and near-term "early actions," such as the Mill River Footbridge and the repurposing of underutilized house spaces to create much-needed third spaces, alongside pilots for satellite dining and academic community spaces. These projects advance Smith's strategic plan goals while laying the groundwork for longer-term, more aspirational initiatives, including multi-year investments in renewal and decarbonization.

Recognizing that campus needs and priorities will continue to evolve, the CUP provides a ten-year vision that balances ambition with adaptability. By emphasizing stewardship, prioritization, and the thoughtful use of constrained resources, the plan ensures that investments deliver lasting value while remaining responsive to future conditions and opportunities.



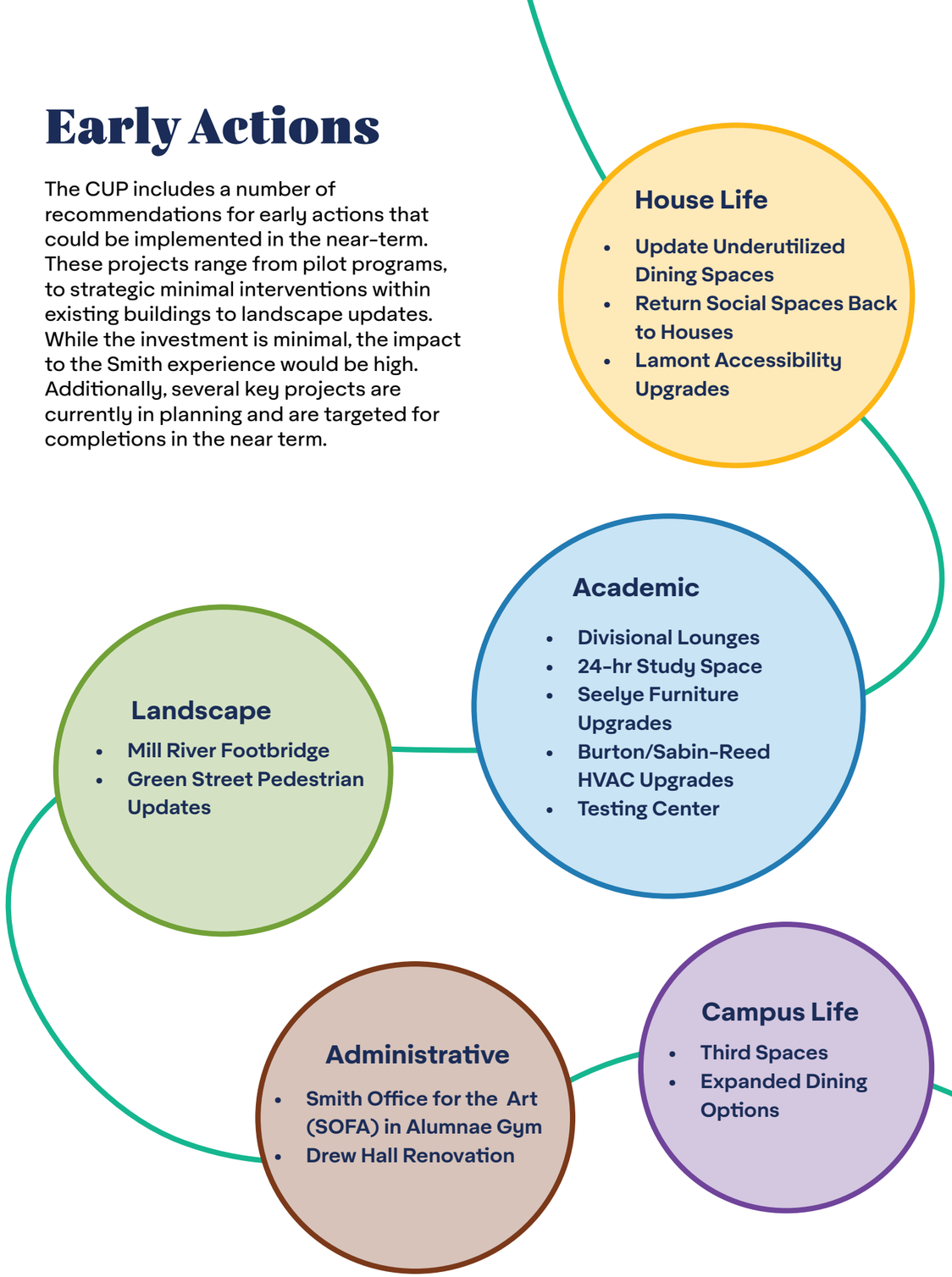
Multi-year Initiatives



- Academic
- Administrative
- Campus Life
- House Life
- Wellness & Recreation
- Landscape & Public Realm
- Mobility & Accessibility

Early Actions

The CUP includes a number of recommendations for early actions that could be implemented in the near-term. These projects range from pilot programs, to strategic minimal interventions within existing buildings to landscape updates. While the investment is minimal, the impact to the Smith experience would be high. Additionally, several key projects are currently in planning and are targeted for completions in the near term.



Future Studies

A Campus Use Plan offers preliminary beginning to next steps, and in order to realize the vision outlined in this plan, future studies are recommended.

Building on both earlier Smith studies and the recommendations of the CUP, additional focused studies of proposed projects will advance programming and design discussions with the Smith community. Ideas outlined in this plan will be tested in greater detail, fine-tuning project feasibility and costs. For example, the conversation about a new dining model will be revisited with the two-dining venue proposal and the satellite venue options developed. Another key plan recommendation — the long-term strategy for house renewal — will be further defined through additional study and campus discussions.

Other recommended future studies are broader in scope. Through the CUP planning process, several areas requiring additional study were identified. These include the following:

- **Campus Transportation and Parking Planning**
- **Campus Wayfinding and Signage Planning**
- **Accessibility Action Planning**
- **Energy and Infrastructure Planning**
- **Campus Architecture Building Standards**
- **Sustainable Design Guidelines**

Vision 2056

Discover everywhere. Lead anywhere. Belong here.

PARADISE ROAD

PARADISE POND

ROUND HILL ROAD

COLLEGE LANE

HENSHAW AVENUE

MILL RIVER

GREEN STREET

ELM STREET

WEST STREET

MAIN STREET

STATE STREET

N

- Proposed Buildings
- Proposed Renovation
- Proposed Renewal
- Existing Buildings
- The Loop

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