

## RESIDENTIAL LIFE

FIGURE 1

Table of Existing Housing Configurations

FIGURE 2

Chisholm Hall, UTSA Main Campus

FIGURE 3

Chaparral Village, UTSA Main Campus

### OVERVIEW

Non-academic aspects of on-campus student life include student housing, student services, and Intramural/Recreational Sports. The latter is covered in an earlier section of this chapter. This section focuses on student housing.

### UNIVERSITY HOUSING

The master planning process included a Comprehensive Housing Plan. The Needs Assessment Phase included a review of current housing, focus groups and interviews, a residential life and student services review, an off-campus housing assessment, current and prospective student surveys, and a program planning workshop. The Implementation Plan Phase included project pro formas and a housing system financial plan and tested various scenarios using different approaches to meeting UTSA's housing needs. The final plan reflects a financial approach that achieves the University's most important goals and meets applicable local and UT System requirements.

### Existing Housing System

In fiscal year 2008–09, UTSA offered 1,678 beds managed by UTSA's Department of Housing and Residence Life and 1,965 beds owned and managed by a private provider, Campus Living Villages (CLV). Taken together, the housing system consists of shared or private bedrooms with private baths in Chisholm Hall, suites with living areas and kitchenettes in Chaparral and Laurel Villages, and apartments in University Oaks. Figure 1 summarizes the system.

### Student Opinions of Current Housing

Fifty-seven students took part in nine focus group sessions; participants had relatively few complaints about their on-campus housing, and almost every group mentioned that they believe UTSA has “the best housing in Texas.” Participants said that students enjoy living on campus mainly because they are near campus facilities and services. Living on campus also allows students to be more involved in campus activities and programs and affords more social interaction with other students. Students who live on campus feel safe and have fewer concerns with driving (e.g., gas price changes affect those with cars less) and parking. Housing also provides some attractive amenities. International participants noted that adequate on-campus housing is essential for them because they are unfamiliar with the area when they arrive and seldom know anyone.

Students enjoy having an academic-year lease, having private or semi-private bathrooms, 24-hour access to laundry facilities, and residence life programming. Most agree that living on campus is appropriate for first-year students, as it aids in their transition from high school to college.

Some students dislike the high cost of their rooms for what they perceive as the low value. Students also dislike the no-tolerance alcohol policy of the University and the meal plan requirement. There is a perception among some residents that parking permits for residents are expensive and the lots near housing are often full. Others dislike noise, inconvenient shared kitchens, and too few washers and dryers.

Popularity of the halls depends on personal preference. Participants who live in or have lived in Chaparral Village are opposed to the idea of sharing a bedroom; those who live in Chisholm Hall enjoy their experience and do not mind sharing a room. International participants and others found the Oaks appealing because the housing style most resembles a typical apartment with full kitchens and the residents are not required to have a meal plan so they can cook the food they are accustomed to eating. Housing residents use and appreciate access to the library, the Neighborhood Centers, and the pool. Some participants believe services, convenience, and security add to the value of on-campus housing.

Hall	Year Open	Unit Type	Units	Beds	Rate FY 07-08	Rate FY 08-09
Chaparral Village	2004	Suites	301	1,002		
		12 buildings				
		+ 5 centers				
Laurel Village	2007	Suites		676		
		Phase I		206		
		3 buildings				
		+ 2 centers				
Chisholm Hall	1980s	Bedrooms w/ Private Baths	256	509		
		1 Shared Bedroom w/ Private Bath	253	506	\$559	\$585
		1 Private Bedroom w/ Private Bath	3	3	\$891	\$930
University Oaks	1990s	Apartments	600	1,456		
		Efficiency (unfurnished) Apt			\$802	\$826
		Double Efficiency Apt			\$413	\$432
		1 BR (unfurnished) Apt			\$898	\$930
		2 BR/1 BA Apt			\$538	\$604
		2 BR/2 BA Apt			\$557	\$624
		4 BR Apt			\$447	\$509



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### Importance of Providing Housing at UTSA

Survey respondents indicated the importance of providing housing for specific student populations at UTSA. The highest percentages of respondents ranked international students, freshmen, and out-of-state students as “extremely important” to house. Respondents did not believe it is as important to provide housing for graduate students and students with a spouse or children. Figure 7 shows the percentages and relative importance of housing certain types of students.

### OFF-CAMPUS MARKET

#### The Attraction of Off-Campus Housing

According to focus group participants, the most important factors students consider when choosing off-campus housing include price and proximity to campus. Other factors are room size, amenities, private bedrooms, and private bathrooms. Students move off campus because living off campus is less expensive; they can eat later in the evening and escape campus rules and regulations. Once students move off campus, there are drawbacks. Academic-year leases are hard to find and students do not appreciate having to pay for housing they are not occupying during the summer months. Students dislike having to deal with additional monthly

bills and having to pay for Internet service, commuting to class and finding a parking space when going to campus, and the sense of being detached from campus events.

Respondents who previously lived on campus most often cite the desire for a more independent lifestyle and cost as the reasons for moving off campus. They also want a larger bedroom, more convenient parking, a lower noise level, and no alcohol restrictions.

#### Campus Area Market

The area surrounding campus consists of two types of apartment complexes: “student-oriented” complexes—Hill Country Place, the Reserve, the Outpost, and Maverick Creek—that offer individual leases and tend to have amenities favored by the student renter, and “market” apartment complexes that rent units under a single lease, tend to offer fewer amenities, and cater to non-student renters. Development is already underway on some new apartments near the campus, and other projects are in the discussion phase.

For single student survey respondents that rent on their own and do not share a bedroom, the median monthly cost of housing ranges from \$485 per person in four-bedroom units (\$460 rent + \$25 other expenses) to

\$740 per person in one-bedroom units (\$600 rent + \$140 other expenses). Figure 8 shows the median per-person monthly cost where “n” is the number of respondents reporting for that unit type.

As shown in Figure 6, comparing the median rents from the various sources reveals that at the median, students rent one- and two-bedroom units slightly below median market rates. Students tend to gravitate toward more established, older, and more affordable properties in the market; fewer students rent new, high-end market apartments geared toward affluent renters.

Market	Unit Type				
	Eff./Studio	1BR	2BR	3BR	4BR
ASL Research—Market	\$480	\$692	\$900	\$1,275	-
ASL Research—Student-Oriented	-	\$825	\$1,115	\$1,545	\$1,960
Survey—Single Students	\$500	\$600	\$868	\$1,275	\$1,840
Survey—Family Students	-	\$615	\$700	\$863	\$1,000

**FIGURE 4**  
University Oaks Apartments, UTSA Main Campus

**FIGURE 5**  
Laurel Village, UTSA Main Campus

**FIGURE 6**  
Comparison of Median Rents—UTSA Main Campus

**FIGURE 7**  
Relative Importance of Housing

- Extremely Important
- Somewhat Important
- Not Very Important
- Not Important

**FIGURE 8**  
Single Students—Median per-Person Monthly Housing Expenses by Unit Type

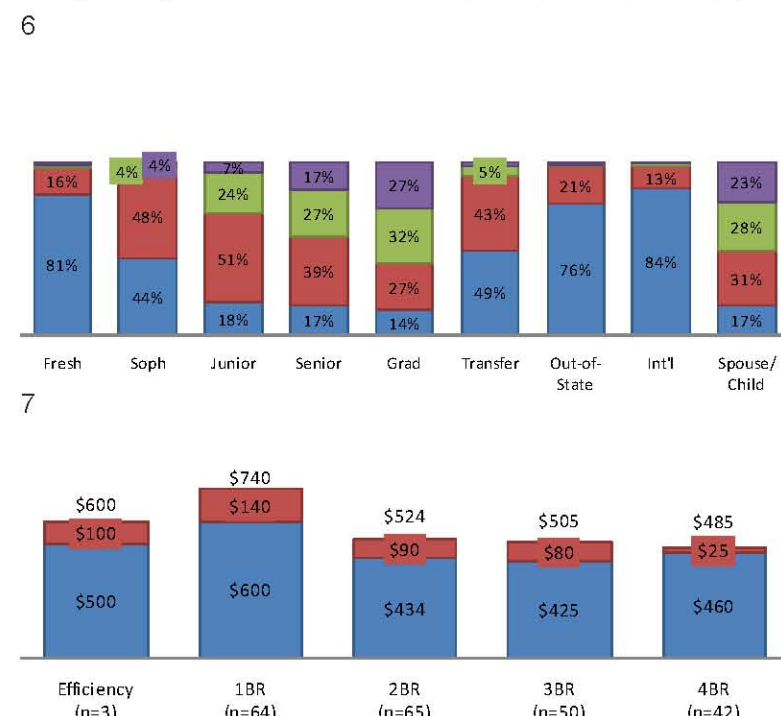
- Rent
- Other Costs



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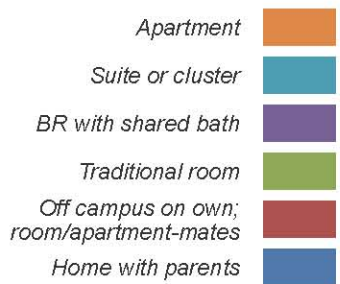
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**FIGURE 1**  
Progression of Appropriate Unit Type  
by Academic Class Level



**HOUSING PREFERENCES**

**Unit Type Preference**

The survey tested student opinions on the type of campus housing that would be most appropriate for each stage of the academic career. Interestingly, as shown in Figure 1, although most students preferred more private housing for themselves, respondents recognize that less private housing—the third/green and fourth/purple bars in the chart below—is appropriate, especially for freshmen and sophomore years.

**Unit Type Considerations**

Focus group participants reviewed several floor plans. Many focus group participants thought sharing a bathroom with three other people would be too difficult. A shared-bedroom unit may be appropriate for freshmen students because having a roommate is a typical freshman year experience, but this unit needs common areas in the hallways. Many students have never shared a bedroom before and would find a roommate unsettling; many believe that after their first year they are entitled to more privacy.

Private-bedroom units are more appealing to most participants. Many think private bedrooms are appropriate for older students, who have already established a core group of friends, and less appropriate for freshmen, but private bedrooms would be attractive for those students who enter into the “potluck” room draw and do not know their potential roommates.

**Interest**

If housing with the floor plan options presented in the survey had been available to the respondents for the 2007–08 academic year when they

were choosing their housing, 13% of all respondents indicated they would have definitely lived there and 29% indicated they might have lived there. Figure 2 separates results by cohort with the percentage of on-campus respondents showing interest significantly greater than off-campus and Downtown (80% of on-campus vs. 34% each of off-campus and Downtown respondents indicated either definite or 50/50 interest).

Those who were not interested in the proposed housing cited the main reasons as the expense of the housing and concern about level of rules and regulations.

**DEMAND ANALYSIS**

Applying full-time, off-campus student survey respondents’ levels of interest to full-time enrollment of such students by class level, the housing consultant estimates an incremental demand of almost 2,000 students who now live off campus, but would have been interested in living in one of the new or renovated options if it had been available in fall 2007 at the tested rents.

As shown in Figure 3, there is potential incremental demand from students currently living off campus for almost 2,000 beds.

Using the same methodology applied to enrollment projections for fall 2017, demand would increase by 390 beds, to 2,368, over the next ten years. If a more generous approach is used—applying today’s combined rate of actual demand plus incremental demand to the projected enrollment in 2017—incremental demand could be 2,839, representing growth of another 862 beds over the decade.

**Unit Preference**

Although student unit preference is only one of many factors that planners should consider in programming additions to the housing system, it can help to understand the options. As Figure 4 shows, if allocated by student preference, a two-private-bedroom apartment and a two-private-bedroom-with-one-shared-bath unit (with no living area and no kitchen) would be the most popular.

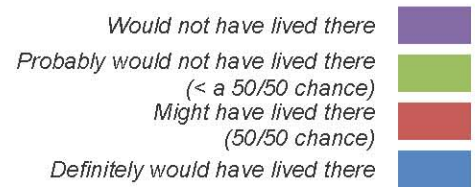
**Price Sensitivity**

To gauge respondents’ sensitivity to the level of rents that the survey attached to each unit type, the survey tested lower rates for those who indicated that the original rents were too high. As Figure 5 shows, demand increases by about 1% with an initial 10% drop in rents and an additional 16% with a second 10% reduction. This suggests limited ability to raise rents significantly above current levels.

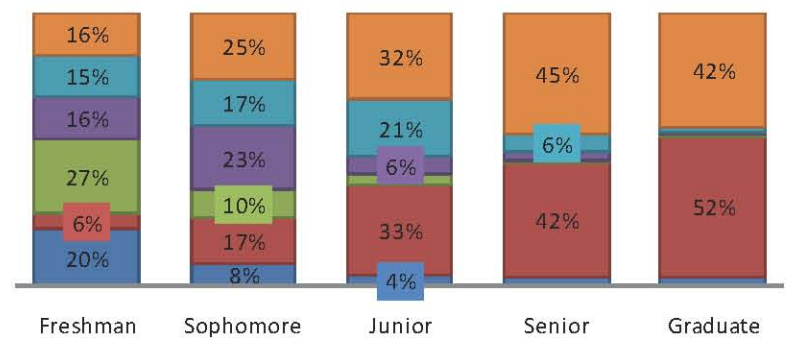
**OPERATIONS ANALYSIS**

The Planning process included a review of operational aspects of UTSA Housing and Residence Life. Student housing is a significant part of the evolution of UTSA into a premier public research university, serving a regional population. In the early 1990s, UTSA decided that campus housing was an important amenity to offer students when it first offered on-campus housing to students in Chisholm Hall and University Oaks. More recently, the University decided to invest in additional housing with the development of Chaparral and Laurel Villages. The issues confronting UTSA as it continues to expand student housing on campus include the relationship with CLV (the owner of Chisholm Hall and University Oaks), the next type of housing to develop and how to structure it financially, the

**FIGURE 2**  
Interest in Housing on Campus,  
Fall 2007



**FIGURE 3**  
UTSA Main Campus Estimated Incremental  
Demand for Fall 2007



Fall 2007 Class	Full-Time Off-Campus Enrollment	Definitely Interested Capture Rate	50% Closure	Might Be Interested Capture Rate	25% Closure	Potential Incremental Demand
Freshman	4,157	17%	357	27%	276	633
Sophomore	3,175	6%	101	35%	279	380
Junior	3,379	7%	116	31%	264	380
Senior	4,046	8%	169	25%	253	421
Graduate	1,105	14%	76	32%	87	163
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,862</b>		<b>819</b>		<b>1,159</b>	<b>1,978</b>

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expansion of living-learning programs, and the growth of the relatively new Housing and Residence Life Department.

Housing and Residence Life has matured more quickly and effectively than one might expect. The leadership is strong and the operational structures put in place have been effective in providing living accommodations while developing a clear alignment with a robust learning environment on campus. Partnering with the Learning Communities office and other academic support services, the staff in Housing and Residence Life has developed a good foundation for expansion on their departmental tag line—“Living while Learning.”

Allowing the Housing and Residence Life Department to develop as a comprehensive student housing program with its own facility management staff is an effective, and somewhat unusual, organizational development for such a young program. This will serve the students living on campus very well and allow housing to maintain service to resident students as a clear priority.

In planning to expand on campus housing, it will be important for UTSA to commit all revenues produced by students living on campus to the maintenance and expansion of campus housing. This includes the surpluses produced by Chisholm and University Oaks, vending revenues from housing locations, interest on housing fund balances, and other ancillary revenue generated from services and income generated by housing facilities and services.

**PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

**Approach**

The developed program balances student preferences by unit type at designated rents with fiscal constraints, building design requirements and site limitations, the mission of on-campus housing, and the desires of the campus and the UT System Administration. It also addresses student demands while reflecting the needs of the campus, the constraints of the existing housing system, and the UT System’s financial guidelines.

Students indicated a high level of demand for semi-suites and apartments—unit types that would complement the new suite-style units at Laurel and Chaparral Villages—but the wide range of demand preference allows wide flexibility for the University in terms of addressing student preferences. Initially, the University expressed a goal of housing 20% of enrollment on campus, which would have required an additional 2,000 beds in fall 2007 and another 1,000 more beds for projected enrollment by 2017. UTSA’s highest priority goal for housing is to attract and retain freshmen, and the University hopes that building semi-suite-style units, many with double-occupancy bedrooms, will help build community more than is possible in the University Oaks Apartments or the full suites at Chaparral and Laurel Villages.

To remain self-supporting, housing rents must generate sufficient revenues to cover operating expenses as well as the debt service—primarily a function of construction cost and interest rates—for the bonds used to finance projects. With students’ price-sensitivity limiting UTSA’s ability to charge high rents, the challenge for UTSA has been in finding a quality level for new construction that is both affordable and acceptable.

In rounded figures, the proposed program (included in the Appendix) calls for increasing the number of beds in the housing system by about half to just over 5,300 beds, with most new beds double-occupancy and all in semi-suite configurations, which help support expanded food service operations.

This scenario accomplishes these goals and results in almost two-thirds of beds in suite- or apartment-style units with about 60% in single-occupancy bedrooms, in response to student preference. The table below summarizes the recommended changes to the existing program by bedroom occupancy and unit configuration.

	Existing	Planned	Change	% Change
Singles	2,554	3,002	448	17.5%
Doubles	956	2,316	1,360	142.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,510</b>	<b>5,318</b>	<b>1,808</b>	<b>51.5%</b>
Semi-Suites	509	2,317	1,808	355.2%
Suites	1,676	1,676	–	0.0%
Apartments	1,325	1,325	–	0.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,510</b>	<b>5,318</b>	<b>1,808</b>	<b>51.5%</b>

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With over 2,500 freshmen living on campus, Chisholm Hall’s double-occupancy rooms with private baths can now serve only 20% of them, but at the completion of this housing plan, UTSA could assign semi-suites to more than 90% of freshmen who choose to live on campus, and some freshmen would still be able to live in suites. The proposed unit inventory is such that no student should be forced to live in a unit that is inappropriate for their class standing. In addition to the age-appropriate progression of unit types, the University strongly supports freshman housing in double-occupancy bedrooms with a progression to single-occupancy bedrooms as class standing rises. Consequently, new halls will have primarily double-occupancy bedrooms, whereas the majority of existing construction consists of single bedrooms. Overall, the system will evolve from 73% singles/27% doubles to 56% singles/44% doubles.

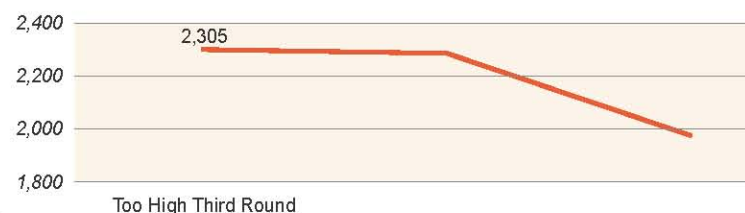
**FIGURE 4**  
*Demand Allocated by Unit Preference*

**FIGURE 5**  
*Demand Curve*

**FIGURE 6**  
*Recommended Changes to Existing Program*

UNIT TYPE	First Test	Off-Campus			Potential Incremental Demand
		Too High Second Round	Too High Third Round	Interested Student Preference	
Trad DBL	\$520	\$470	\$425	3%	65
2-DBL w/1 shared BA	\$605	\$545	\$490	3%	52
2-Private BR w/1 shared BA	\$640	\$575	\$520	28%	557
2-DBL BR Suite	\$655	\$590	\$530	11%	216
2-Private BR Suite	\$750	\$675	\$610	9%	177
2-DBL BR Apt	\$710	\$640	\$575	4%	72
4-Private BR Apt	\$785	\$705	\$635	10%	196
2-Private BR Apt	\$855	\$770	\$695	32%	642
				<b>100%</b>	<b>1,978</b>

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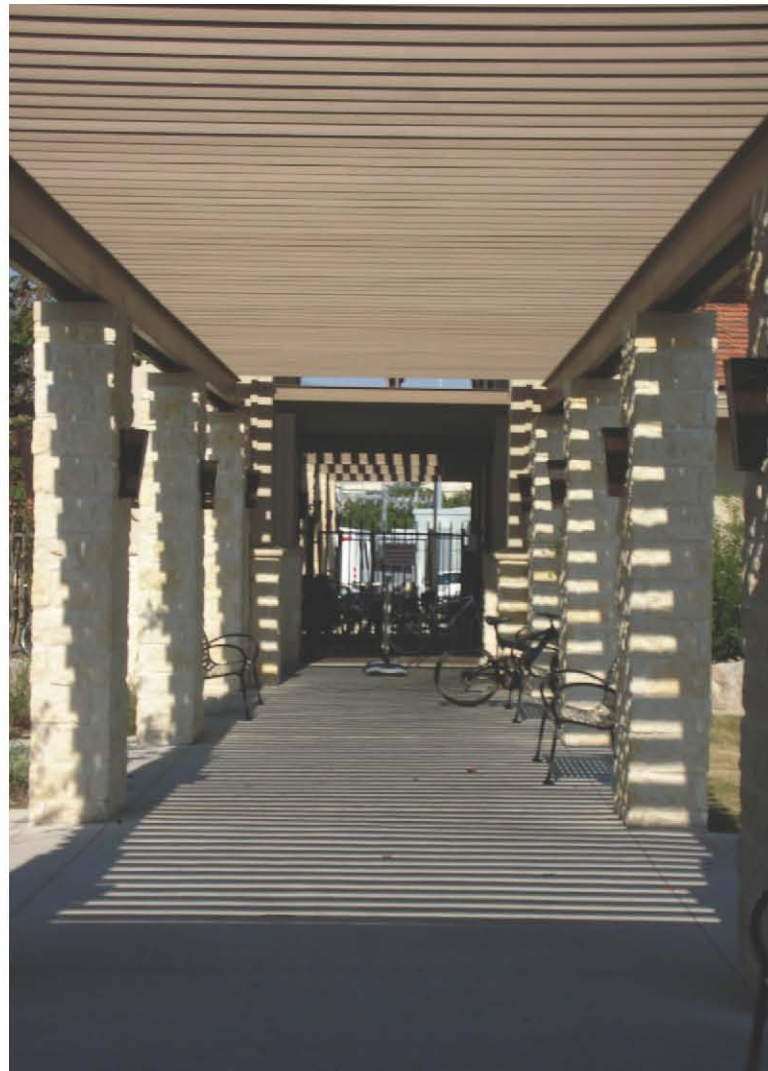


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**FIGURE 1**  
Chaparral Village Loggia, UTSA Main Campus

**FIGURE 2**  
Table showing proposed on-campus student residential accommodations



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**IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

The financial plans, included in the Appendix, use a model that allows the development of scenarios to test different approaches. They establish that the recommendations for housing are financially feasible.

For UTSA, one of the most important aspects of new housing is its institutional quality of construction. Although more economical wood-frame construction may have been appropriate for the two Village projects' suite-style units, UTSA would prefer residence halls with a more traditional concrete and steel structure to compare to the quality of residence halls at UT Austin or Texas A&M. UT Austin's Almetris Duren Hall, which cost \$195 per square foot in 2005, served as a starting point for new construction budgets, but an analysis of the Almetris Duren Hall budget concluded that since costs have risen close to 10% per year since 2005, by 2010, \$275 per square foot would be more appropriate.

The financial plan gives two alternative solutions, one of which assumes a wood-frame structure similar to Chaparral Village and Laurel Village, while the other assumes a more institutional concrete frame construction similar to Almetris Duren Hall. Details of both scenarios are included in the Appendix. The total development budget for the plan assuming institutional-quality new construction of just over 1,800 beds is \$189,593,000, including financing costs and inflation, for a cost of almost \$105,000 per bed and \$355 per square foot.

As Figure 2 shows, the final plan commences with two building projects occurring simultaneously, the first with 384 beds and the second with 256 beds, coming online by fall 2011. The next phase of 384 beds will come online in fall 2016, and the final large phase of 784 beds is scheduled for fall 2010.

Project	Project Type	Rev. Bds/Unts	Dev. Bdgt.	Sched Comp
Zone 1 (B.1.2)	New	384	\$32,805,000	Aug-2011
Zone 1 (B.1.3)	New	256	24,346,000	Aug-2011
Zone 1 (B.1.1)	New	384	38,811,000	Aug-2016
Zone 2 (B.2.1)	New	784	93,631,000	Aug-2020
Chaparral Village	Maintain	1,002	-	Aug-2037
Laurel Village	Maintain	674	-	Aug-2037
University Oaks	Not in Plan	1,325	-	Aug-2037
Chisholm Hall	Not in Plan	509	-	Aug-2037
		5,318	\$189,593,000	Aug-2037

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**RECREATION / WELLNESS AND STUDENT SERVICES**

The University currently has a deficit of student services space relative to its peers. Potential sites for expanded of Student Services space facilities are indicated on Figure 2. UTSA's Intramural and recreational sports programs are discussed in a preceding section of this Master Plan.





**FIGURE 2**  
Existing and Proposed Campus Life Plan,  
UTSA Main Campus

-  Existing Housing
-  Proposed Housing
-  Existing Recreational Space
-  Proposed Recreational Space
-  Existing Student Services
-  Proposed Student Services
-  Proposed Collegetown