



UNC Asheville Millennial Campus Development Advisory Committee

Meeting 1: January 2026 | Summary Notes

In this first convening, the Committee began by reviewing UNC Asheville's institutional context. UNC Asheville has experienced consecutive years of declining enrollment, in a shifting landscape for American higher education, and as it approaches a national "demographic cliff" among traditional college-age students. Enrollment is critical to enabling UNC Asheville to deliver its impact to the region. UNC Asheville has already begun adjusting its academic offerings to add or strengthen degree programs that are attractive to students today. Prospective students also want a collegiate experience that includes vibrant gathering places and a strong connection to local communities and culture.

The Committee agreed that its work must describe a path to achievement of three goals:

- Add housing for the university community
- Create a vibrant place for students to gather that is tied to the energy of the city
- Generate revenue for the university through development-connected cash flow and/or increased enrollment

The Committee directed its consultants to prepare a map of UNC Asheville's holdings, denoting plausibility of goal-satisfying development. The map will depict Millennial Campus designation, topography, stormwater conditions, infrastructure, and contemporary utilization.

The Committee identified three development typologies or outcomes it wants to explore. 1) Create a "front porch" for students and the Asheville community to mingle in a vibrant, actively programmed place; 2) Leverage university academic and regional economic strengths to build a public-private partnership that attracts investment in place; and, 3) Develop a "new neighborhood" anchored by housing affordable to students, faculty, and staff. The Committee directed its consultants to identify and present precedent case studies that examine the extent to which other universities have succeeded in advancing these development typologies to meet goals akin to UNC Asheville's.

The Millennial Campus designation enables UNC Asheville to simultaneously address these three goals.

The UNC System crafted the designation to empower schools to establish real estate and programmatic partnerships that attract new investment. UNC Asheville's Millennial Campus properties can support real estate development that delivers housing, creates vibrant places, and generates meaningful revenue.

While the Committee will assess all University properties including those with Millennial Campus designations, UNC Asheville believes the South Campus and Broadway properties are likely best suited among its Millennial Campus properties to deliver on its goals. The South Campus property is proximate to existing campus nodes and infrastructure; both are located on the Broadway corridor, closest to Downtown Asheville. Those locational attributes make the parcels likely to be most attractive to private development partners, whose access to capital will be required to advance the project.

The Committee agreed that it must engage the community to gather feedback on how UNC Asheville can achieve its goals via development of the Millennial Campus properties. The Committee will engage with stakeholders at multiple touchpoints to provide opportunities for collective thinking and problem solving. The Committee discussed and generally agreed that a mix of (1) structured interviews of a diverse group of community leaders to be conducted at milestones in the Committee's deliberations; (2) by invitation, individual community feedback sessions with a wide range of people and organizations, including known opponents of the initial development proposal considered by the University; and (3) a public-facing website with a mechanism for

community input would be desirable. The Committee intends to devote one of its sessions to reflecting on community input.

The Committee's final deliverable will provide guidance to UNC Asheville administration soliciting development interest in Millennial Campus properties. Recommendations, grounded in data, analysis, and community feedback, will inform the development objectives, programmatic expectations, and other parameters UNC Asheville may incorporate into a competitive developer solicitation. The Committee agreed that its recommendations should be publicly available to provide clarity and transparency for stakeholders as UNC Asheville moves forward with developing its Millennial Campus properties.

Future Committee sessions will open with defined meeting objectives to shape discussion and ensure progress towards decisions. These meeting objectives will be restated in future session summaries.