

UNC Asheville Millennial Campus Development Advisory Committee

Meeting 3: March 2026 | Summary Notes

In its third meeting, the Committee reviewed the full portfolio of UNC Asheville's Millennial Campus properties to assess overall development viability. The Committee then engaged with technical and market experts, along with selected University senior staff members, to better understand key factors influencing development potential, including:

- In-depth analysis of the South Campus and Broadway (Zillicoa) physical site conditions, including topography, live streams, vegetation, and wildlife;
- Real estate market conditions in Asheville across housing, retail, office, and hotel sectors; and
- UNC Asheville's programmatic needs, including student and faculty housing.

Based on this review, the Committee identified three Millennial Campus properties as viable for development: Broadway (Zillicoa), South Campus, and the Rhoades property. Other Millennial Campus properties were determined to have significant topographical constraints and/or limitations related to size and location, making it difficult, at best, to achieve the University's development objectives.

Topography and live streams present a significant challenge for the Broadway (Zillicoa) property. The presence of a perennial stream, adjacent greenway, and a pronounced ridgeline across much of the site introduces considerable complexity. While still a viable—although somewhat size-constrained—development property, these conditions are expected to increase both the cost and difficulty of development.

In addition to its larger size and attractive location, the South Campus property presents more favorable physical conditions. While aquatic resources have been identified on the site, the site has the potential for avoidance of impacts to those resources that would require mitigation as well as limited impacts to unique vegetation. While the Committee recommends additional study to determine appropriate development strategies for habitat protection (having noted the presence of a bat species on portions of the site) and acknowledged the desirability of maintaining preserved areas and including greenway space, this property clearly appears to offer the greatest opportunity to achieve the University's long-term development objectives.

The Rhoades property (located at the corner of Merrimon Ave. and W.T. Weaver Blvd.) also emerged as a strong candidate for development, potentially in the near term. The Committee recommends further exploration of this site, primarily for its potential to generate revenue for the University in a public-private real estate development partnership. While the South Campus offers greater scale and the ability to more fully advance the University's objectives, the revenue potential of the Rhoades site could supplement and potentially reduce the revenue requirements of the South Campus development.

The Committee also reviewed the feasibility of a multi-use soccer stadium at the South Campus location based on the original proposal presented by the McCullers Group. In reviewing the scale and footprint of that proposal, the Committee expressed concern that a stadium would consume a substantial portion of the site, while materially limiting the ability to achieve the University's core development objectives of increased enrollment and creation of a student and community gathering place. Accommodating a stadium would essentially require designing the site around that use, rather than around the University's broader development needs. *(During its review of the McCullers proposal, the Committee noted that a revised stadium concept for South Campus, developed by a community stakeholder and UNC Asheville alum, had recently been submitted. It was decided that this proposal would be reviewed and discussed at the April meeting.)*

The Committee agreed with the importance of incorporating greenway and open space elements that serve both the University and the broader community. At the same time, it recognized that non-revenue generating components must be supported, and more than offset, by uses that are financially attractive to private investment partners.

Based on its prior review of precedent campus developments, the Committee is of the opinion that a successful development strategy should take a phased approach and include a mix of uses, such as multifamily housing, retail, hotel/conference, and, potentially, academic/office space. With that said, the initial phase(s) of the project should achieve sufficient scale to create a meaningful gathering place, generate revenue, and support enrollment growth for UNC Asheville.