University of Victoria

2023/24 Five Year Capital Plan

Date: July 2022
Introduction

The University of Victoria’s success is built on the provision of high-quality education and outstanding student experience, excellence in research and the conscious integration of research and teaching, within a diverse and welcoming environment. In 2022, the university also commenced the development of a new Strategic Plan and Climate and Sustainability Action Plan. The university’s Five Year Capital Plan reflects directions from these planning processes as well as the academic priorities of the university as articulated in the Planning and Budget Framework, Indigenous Plan, Campus Plan and our Institutional Accountability Plan and Report to the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST). One of the emerging areas of the new Strategic Plan is to cultivate a campus that provides extraordinary teaching and learning experiences within spaces that support collaboration and connection. Our Capital Plan is a key planning document that outlines the university’s infrastructure needs, which are a vital component required to achieve this key goal.

Background

Facilities planning is continuous in order to address changes in student program demand and support services, as well as evolving research and teaching requirements to ensure they reflect societal need. To address these changing needs, the university undertakes planning activities that inform future capital requirements, both major capital and annual routine capital. Work will be undertaken to plan for future expansion requirements beyond five years that takes into account our new Strategic Plan that is currently under development.

Provincial goals as well as priorities as articulated in our mandate letter, align with university priorities, and include supporting growth in academic programs that assist in building a strong sustainable economy, increasing affordable housing, fighting climate change through reducing carbon emissions, enhancing climate resiliency, incorporating wood first building design, lasting and meaningful reconciliation, and the renewal of existing infrastructure. In addition to the university’s new Strategic Plan, a new Climate and Sustainability Action Plan is nearing completion which sets bold new targets to accelerate the university’s response to climate change and to drive a culture of sustainability throughout the institution. The university has also prioritized the development of a university-wide Indigenous strategy. This strategy will be a step toward ensuring that Indigenous ways of knowing are respected and supported. Moving this important work forward will require challenging conversations about what we value and prioritize as an institution, and how we contribute to decolonization in a good way.

These new plans will drive change in the use of and demand for space across the institution. The university, based on the AEST space standards, has a gap of 24,466 net assignable square meters (NASM). This is approximately 12.5% below standard, as outlined in Appendix 1. Using this overall institutional assessment as a starting point, planning work is undertaken to confirm the priority projects for addressing the space pressures that result from the gaps in academic and administration
office space, student and central service space\(^1\), and laboratories, as noted in Appendix 1. These space pressures are a consequence of overall student growth and from realignments in programs due to student demand. In developing a renewed culture of collaboration, innovation and sustainability across the campus, the university is also developing new space planning guidelines that embrace new ways of working that lead to collaborative, functional, and supportive workplaces. The guidelines will strive to optimize flexibility within layouts so facilities can better adapt to organization churn, create equitable and function based floor plans and shift away from the hierarchical allocation of space. These guidelines will assist in the development of space optimization strategies to guide future routine capital renovations.

It is important to note that the provision of student housing is not captured within these standards but remains a critical need as the issues of housing supply and affordability continue to be a major challenge within the Victoria region.

**Capital Projects in Planning**

Capital projects fit into six different categories: new priority, whole asset replacement or renewal, student housing, routine capital, carbon neutral, and linear infrastructure.

The following, in priority order, are the major capital projects for the campus:

i. **Murray and Anne Fraser Interiors Modernization and Seismic Upgrading (Category 2 – Whole Asset Replacement and Renewal)**

The university is planning for the renewal of the Fraser Building to be completed in conjunction with the construction of the National Centre for Indigenous Laws as it is an addition to the Fraser Building. The project ensures the long-term preservation of a key institutional building and significantly improves life safety through seismic upgrades and life safety systems. Safety improvements include fire safety systems, seismic bracing and electrical substation upcharge. The project will also result in upgrades to HVAC systems which will reduce GHG emissions. It is anticipated that the renewed HVAC equipment will reduce carbon emissions by 231 tCO2e/yr. Interior improvements are planned to address functional deficiencies and programmatic gaps to better support the Faculty of Law. The project will be phased, including interior improvements, HVAC upgrades and life safety systems to be completed with the National Centre for Indigenous Laws. Seismic upgrading of the building will be completed as a separate project.

**Project Funding**

**Phase 1 - Deep Utilities Rerouting and New Building Electrical Service:** The projected budget for the deep utilities work and electrical upgrades is estimated at $6M and is expected to be funded from AEST.

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\(^1\) Student and central services includes: food services, bookstore, AV/TV, data centre, student computer labs, health, student lounge space, student office and support space and general assembly such as galleries auditorium etc.
Phase 2 - Mechanical Electrical and Sprinkler Upgrades: The projected budget for the HVAC and sprinkler upgrades is estimated at $10M and is expected to be funded from AEST.

Phase 3 - Interior Renovation: The projected budget for the interior renovations and modernization is estimated at $6.7M and is expected to be funded from AEST.

Phase 4 - Seismic Upgrade: The projected budget for the Fraser Building seismic upgrade is estimated at $42M and is expected to be funded through a combination of sources including Provincial, Federal and university funding.

ii. Student Housing (Category 3)

Planning for the next phase of on-campus student housing expansion will continue to help address student demand, as well as the acute regional need for increased rental housing. Living on campus contributes to institutional goals related to the UVic student experience, with areas of focus including successful transition to the university, supportive academic and social programming and fostering a strong sense of belonging in the UVic community. The university is currently constructing 621 net new beds on campus; which includes additional programs and supports for Indigenous students including areas for smudging and an Indigenous student lounge. Additional housing is needed with a focus on graduate and upper year undergraduate students. In 2022, the Victoria vacancy rate for purpose built rental housing was 1%. Housing units renting for under $1,400 have a vacancy rate of less than 0.5%2. Housing availability and affordability within the Victoria area remains a significant challenge for students. UVic will continue to experience excess demand for on-campus accommodation and is planning for additional student housing to meet this demand. The university is planning for a minimum of 500 new housing beds.

Building type, site selection, and high-level costing will be determined in order to support the development of a business case for this project.

iii. Mearns Centre for Learning Interiors Modernization and Seismic Upgrading (Category 2 – Whole Asset Replacement and Renewal)

The Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library is one of the oldest buildings on campus. The main library was completed in two phases (1963, 1974) and remains the busiest building on campus with between 1.4 and 2 million annual visits by students, faculty, staff, and community members. The library provides access to core learning and research materials and acts as a central nexus of campus academic life and community. The Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library is a key enabler of innovation in teaching and research, and provides physical and virtual sites that build connections between a diverse range of people within the university as well as with community

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2 CMHC Rental Market Survey February 2022 –Victoria
partners, and is ideally positioned to provide open, engaged, and enduring access to knowledge.

In 2017, the university developed plans to seismically upgrade the structure. In addition to life safety improvements, interior spaces also require renewal to provide innovative and contemporary spaces that facilitate new directions in teaching, research, and community learning. Interior renovations will also improve spaces for university and community engagement, increase graduate student research and study space, and address the needs of the university art collections. Depending on the availability of funding, these projects could occur simultaneously or be phased in order to minimize disruption to library services.

The renovation of the Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library will transform and elevate the current user experience and extend the on-site services that the library and its campus partners provide to students, faculty, and the community. The programmatic changes to the existing structure will enable the extension of learning and research services that are in heavy demand and provide more opportunities for the types of collaboration and intellectual exploration that often result in innovative solutions to the benefit of society.

**Project Funding**

The estimated total project cost is $135M. This project addresses significant deferred maintenance and presents an opportunity to support innovation in dynamic learning. It is expected to be funded through a combination of sources including Provincial, Federal and university funding. Project timing and phasing will be dependent upon securing government funding.

iv. **Petch Building and Jamie Cassels Centre Farquhar Auditorium Seismic Upgrade (Category 2 – Whole Asset Replacement and Renewal)**

The Petch Building was completed in 1986 and contains the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology and the Centre for Biomedical Research. The seismic upgrade project includes interior and exterior re-enforcement of the building structure.

The 1,200 seat Jamie Cassels Centre Farquhar Auditorium is the premiere performing arts space on campus. The facility was completed in 1972 and hosts a variety of campus events including convocation as well as community events such as the Victoria Symphony. This project includes improvements to the structural performance of the roof structure while minimizing impacts on the acoustic qualities of the performance venue.

**Project Funding:**
This project is estimated at $45.25M and will be funded through the routine capital funding envelope from the Province and/or another government infrastructure grant program.

Detailed cost estimates for Clearihue and Elliot Lecture Theatres have not yet been completed. These projects are expected to be funded primarily from AEST.
v. **Campus Active Transportation Improvement Program (Category 6 – Linear Infrastructure)**

The Active Transportation Improvement Program will enhance active transportation infrastructure through the renewal and upgrading of sidewalks, pathways and roads as outlined in the university’s Campus Cycling Plan and Campus Greenway. Once implemented, this project will improve pedestrian and cycling access on and through campus by renewing and upgrading 2.1KMs of pathways and 3.5KMs of roadways. Upgraded amenities are a key strategy in achieving our goal of 70% of all trips to campus utilizing transit, cycling, walking or carpooling.

In 2022, the university applied for 60% of funding toward both of these projects through the [Federal Active Transportation Fund](#).

**Project Funding**

The total projected budget for the Active Transportation Improvement Program is estimated at $24.9 and is expected to be through a combination of Federal, Provincial and university funding.
D. Planning Activities

In order to ensure that institutional infrastructure and future five-year capital plans continue to reflect institutional needs and priorities, each year planning activities are undertaken to inform future capital development and planning. In the near term such planning activities will include:

a) Centre for Integrated Performance and Wellbeing

The university is exploring partnership opportunities to co-locate a new Centre for Integrated Performance and Wellbeing on campus. The new centre will combine academic expertise, high performance and healthy living research, industry, and community engagement to foster a dynamic, active learning environment. The centre will focus on applied and multi-disciplinary research to support healthy living as well as performance, integrated health and sustainable well-being. The centre will increase the vibrancy of campus life through development of infrastructure and programmatic initiatives that offer new opportunities for recreation, promote wellness, and advance health research impacts. Moreover, the centre will be home to new professional programming in performance and health-related disciplines, becoming an important training centre in support of UVic’s commitment to the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” A central tenet of the planning process will be engagement with Indigenous partners and communities to explore how the centre can support reconciliation, particularly with respect to incorporating Indigenous ways of knowing in performance and health research, as well as supporting international and national Indigenous sporting events.

b) Master of Physical Therapy and Master of Speech Pathology

Physical therapists are primary care professionals who work in a variety of settings, such as rehabilitation centers hospitals and private clinics in both rural and urban areas. The Master of Physical Therapy program at the University of British Columbia (UBC) is the only entry-to-practice program in BC. In partnership with UBC, the university is exploring expanding this program onto the UVic campus. The partnership would also provide access to the Master of Science in Speech Pathology offered through UBC’s School of Audiology and Speech Sciences. This partnership would provide students access to these programs on Vancouver Island and continue to support demand within the province for physical therapists, speech-language pathologists and audiologists. As part of the planning for the development of a program, the university will be exploring opportunities to house complimentary programs such as the Nurse Practitioner program.

c) Complete Community – Housing, Commercial Opportunities and Partnerships.

The capital region has experienced rapid price growth in housing and very low availability for both rental and ownership housing. Securing housing that is attainable for both students and employees has become much more challenging. Other academic institutions in British Columbia have successfully built university communities that benefit university employees, students and the broader public as well as providing new sources of revenue to support the university’s
academic mission. The university will begin to explore opportunities to utilize university land holdings to develop housing and revenue generating uses to increase the supply of housing in the region and establish new sources of revenue. High level principles have been established to commence this work, including that the project should generate revenue, be financially sustainable, support the university’s mission, include a strong governance structure, opportunities for partnerships, provide engagement opportunities with local Indigenous communities and neighbours, and support the university’s sustainability values. The project should also provide opportunities to support diverse forms of housing, complimentary commercial uses and explore the development of space to support Indigenous communities.

d) Faculty of Business Expansion

Student demand for Business, including entrepreneurship and innovation, has been very strong. UVic’s Peter B. Gustavson School of Business has expanded by creating two additional cohorts and expanding its BCom minor program. This project was first established in the Capital Plan in 2014 as an addition to the Business and Economics Building to provide for additional capacity to address program growth and will provide incremental space for classroom and seminar spaces, academic offices and student support spaces. Since that time, the program has grown and the university will re-visit the previously established program and siting of the project to ensure it meets the needs of the Faculty.

e) Academic Support Space – Inter-disciplinary Research Laboratories

One of the emerging strategies in the university’s Strategic Plan is to promote greater collaboration and increased opportunities to develop partnerships. This emerging strategy leads to thinking about and planning for more flexible, multipurpose shared space. Most of the current buildings on campus are discipline-based and have therefore been built to address particular needs. While this approach ensures that infrastructure for specific programs are addressed, current space planning and configurations generally do not support the above strategy.

In order to address this strategy the university is planning space differently. In developing the next large expansion, project planning will include broad space type requirements that can be used across faculties and/or departments, and that can be built to provide for future flexibility. Planning will also consider that several of the university’s current buildings were never intended to accommodate many of the current research requirements, resulting in costly renovations. Thus in many cases it is better to build newer facilities and convert current spaces to other purposes.

In developing capital expansion based on space types, consideration can still be made for how these spaces can support future academic priorities and needs. An updated needs assessment will be undertaken that can inform the overall space type planning process. This work can also consider specific needs such as regulatory requirements related to the storage of the university’s art collection, requirements for student common space, and space to support indigenous and other institutional priorities.
f) Net Zero Campus Operations

With the development of a new Climate and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, the university is developing pathways to reach net zero emissions from campus operations. A key driver of greenhouse gas emissions is the university’s District Energy Plant, which is powered by natural gas. In order to demonstrate leadership in climate solutions, the university needs to explore less carbon-intensive energy sources. Each pathway requires significant capital investment in a transition to less carbon intensive energy. This process includes the exploration of electric boiler and heat pump technologies. While more sustainable energy sources are being explored, it is expected that the district energy plant will continue to play a critical role in heating the campus for the foreseeable future.

g) Future Parking Considerations

In 2022, the university will be implementing new transportation demand management measures, including elimination of the annual parking pass and further subsidy to the employee transit pass program. While these measures should influence greater use of active transportation and transit, ongoing capital project construction is expected to result in parking demand remaining at or near capacity over the next several academic years.

The university’s Campus Plan identifies locations for additional parking capacity that will be provided in the form of parking structure(s). Parking structures are significantly more costly than surface lots. Requirement for future parking structures will be influenced by growth of the campus as well as use of existing surface parking lots as future development sites. In 2021, the university completed a Parkade Feasibility Study that provides a recommended parking structure location and parking demand monitoring metrics to inform future capital decision making.

F. SUMMARY

UVic’s Five-Year Capital Plan reflects the academic priorities of the university. As demonstrated in our own Planning and Budget Framework, our Institutional Accountability Plan and Report to AEST, our top priorities are to support all students; meet existing and anticipated program demand; and ensure our programs are of the highest quality. In order to support these institutional priorities, capital planning efforts over the next five years will need to address both academic program and student housing space pressures through some expansion, as well as deferred maintenance requirements through renewal and seismic projects.

The above plan outlines the projects required or in process to support these important institutional goals. The top priority new projects are new student housing, a campus building renewal program and a renewal of campus active transportation infrastructure.
APPENDIX 1: Space Inventory Compared to Standards

**TABLE 1**

UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
Summary Comparison of 2021 BC Space Standards and 2021 Space Inventory
For Formula Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Space Category Number</th>
<th>Space Category Name</th>
<th>BC Space Standards Formula</th>
<th>Nov 1, 2021 Age Adjusted* Inventory</th>
<th>NASM Surplus</th>
<th>NASM Shortfall</th>
<th>Inventory as a Percentage of BC Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Classrooms</td>
<td>18,041</td>
<td>15,678</td>
<td>2,363</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Undergraduate Labs</td>
<td>22,856</td>
<td>22,090</td>
<td>766</td>
<td>96.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Research Labs</td>
<td>25,994</td>
<td>21,846</td>
<td>4,348</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Academic Offices</td>
<td>50,357</td>
<td>34,490</td>
<td>15,867</td>
<td>66.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Administrative Offices</td>
<td>22,932</td>
<td>21,585</td>
<td>1,347</td>
<td>94.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Library Stack/Study/Service</td>
<td>20,522</td>
<td>19,379</td>
<td>1,143</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Recreation/Athletics</td>
<td>12,521</td>
<td>13,413</td>
<td>892</td>
<td>107.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7, 8, 11-15</td>
<td>Student and Central Services</td>
<td>28,216</td>
<td>21,366</td>
<td>6,831</td>
<td>75.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Maintenance Space</td>
<td>3,358</td>
<td>4,762</td>
<td>1,404</td>
<td>141.8%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL NASM** | 204,797 | 174,428 | 30,369 | 85.2% |

*Inventory adjusted for age by excluding 2 percent of the BC System buildings that are over 45 years old — Huts A, B, E, F, Q, R, and Y were excluded from UVic’s inventory.

Institutional Planning and Analysis
June 23, 2022

Note: The above referenced table has been developed based on full campus occupancy during the year and does not take into account reduced occupancy as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.