



2 Context

To set the stage for the campus master plan, this section lays out important information the plan must acknowledge and respond to, including basic facts about the university, growth assumptions and historical development patterns. The most valued aspects of the campus are highlighted, as are issues and opportunities identified and confirmed through consultation with the Cornell and broader communities. The plan seeks to address these and the key challenges that conclude the section.

Campus facts



fig 03 – Map of Main Campus and surroundings

Cornell University is the federal land-grant institution of New York State, a private endowed university, a member of the Ivy League, and a partner of the State University of New York. Its mission is summarized in the immortal words of Ezra Cornell: “I would found an institution where any person can find instruction in any study.” Cornell has been described as the first truly American university because of its founders’ uncommonly egalitarian and practical vision of higher education, and its dedication to the land-grant mission of outreach and public service. Cornell is the only Ivy League university that serves as its state’s federal land-grant institution and whose Board of Trustees includes student, faculty, and staff voting members.

Contract colleges and schools at Cornell University were created by an Act of the New York State Legislature and receive direct funding from New York State. The mission of the contract units is linked directly to the economic and social well-being of New York State. Endowed colleges and schools at Cornell are privately funded and do not receive direct funding from New York State. The attribution of colleges and schools is as follows:

Contract

- College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- College of Human Ecology
- School of Industrial and Labor Relations
- College of Veterinary Medicine

Endowed

- College of Architecture, Art and Planning
- College of Arts and Sciences
- College of Engineering
- School of Hotel Administration
- Graduate School
- Cornell Law School
- Johnson Graduate School of Management
- School of Continuing Education and Summer Sessions

Transcollege

- Faculty of Computing and Information Science



fig 04 – Map of Core Campus and its immediate surroundings

The Ithaca Campus in 2006:

Ithaca Campus Population (approximate)	
Undergraduate students	13,000
Graduate students	6,000
Staff	8,400
Faculty	1,600
Total	29,000

Ithaca Campus Acreages	
	Acres
Tompkins County	12,414
Main Campus Area	2,017

Ithaca Campus Buildings – Main Campus Area		
	No. of Buildings	Gross Square Feet
State Buildings	314	4,126,261
Endowed Buildings	327	10,690,746
All Buildings With CU Interest*	696	14,910,718

* Including endowed, state and other buildings

Buildings by Type – Main Campus Area (based upon the primary space use in the building)		
	No. of Buildings	Gross Square Feet
Academic	325	9,172,763
Administrative	139	1,049,028
Athletics & Recreation	26	811,962
Residential/Student Services	95	3,787,207
Unassigned	10	60,597
Unknown	101	29,161
Total	696	14,910,718

2.2

Growth assumptions and trends

Population projections have been developed for the next 20 to 30 years of university growth, and Cornell's overall population is not expected to grow significantly. The number of undergraduates is expected to hold steady at approximately 13,000. The number of faculty members should increase slowly, from a current total of approximately 1,600 to between 1,700 and 1,800. The number of graduate students is expected to increase in step with the number of new faculty, from a current total of approximately 6,000 to about 7,000. The staff population will also likely grow from a total of approximately 8,400 to about 9,100, mostly to support the new space that is likely to be built.

Over its history, the total floor area at Cornell has increased by an average of one million square feet per decade, although for the past 50 years, the average has been closer to two million square feet. Looking ahead, changing demographics and a focus on sustainable development suggest Cornell will grow more conservatively than in recent decades.

While efficient utilization of space will be an important part of managing growth at Cornell, it is inevitable that the university will build more academic, residential and other space as it responds to current and future research needs and continues to fulfill its mission.

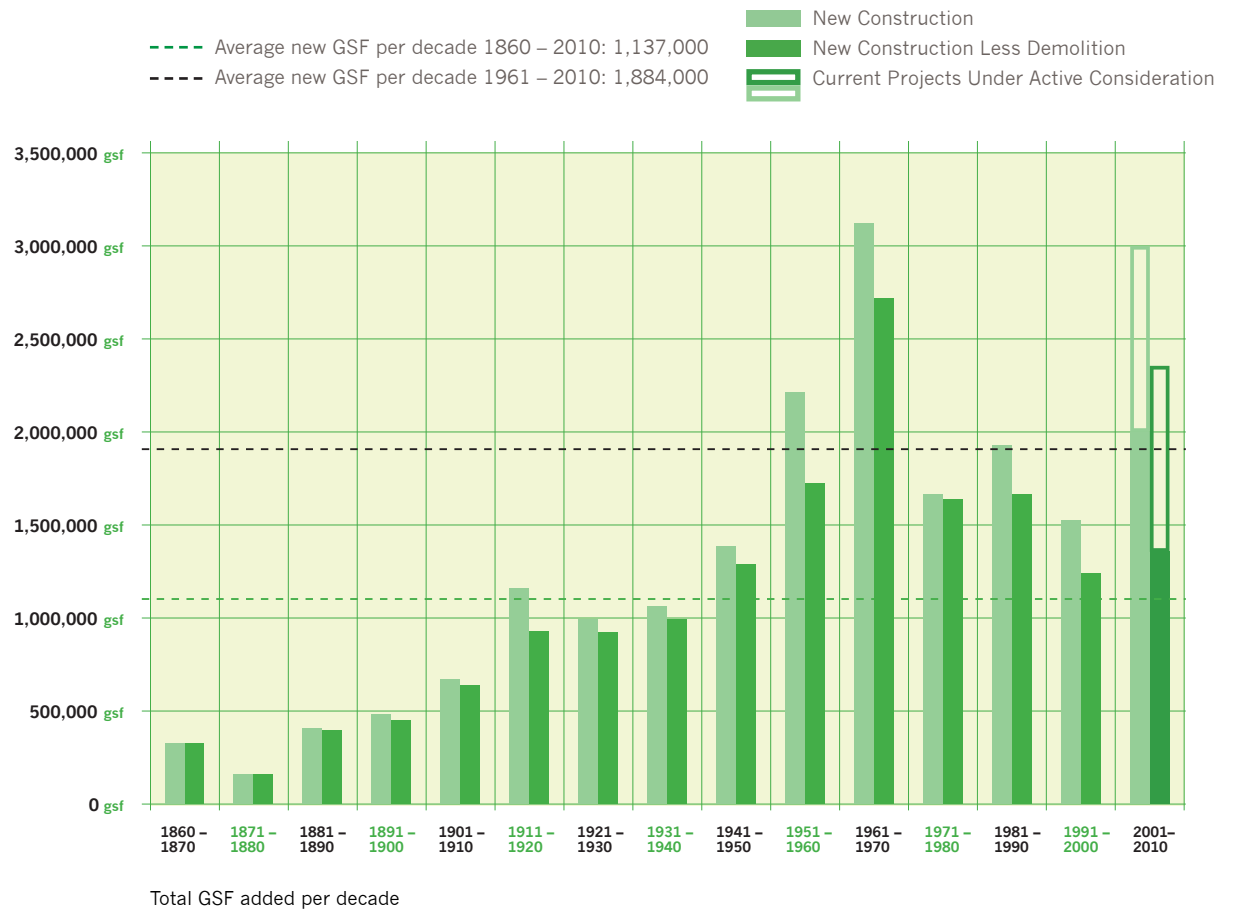
Development on the campus in recent decades has reflected increasing interdisciplinary collaboration and changes in the distribution and organization of academic units on the campus. These trends will continue into the future and be more pronounced, requiring older buildings to adapt and new buildings to be built. The physical sciences will continue to demand substantial amounts of new space, much of it for research and more and more of it being used by undergraduate students. The humanities and social sciences are also top priorities at Cornell. Flexible teaching, meeting and social space will become increasingly important, in addition to the overall quality of the campus, its facilities and its surroundings, as the competition for faculty, students and staff intensifies.

Over the last century, both the university campus and its home communities have expanded their population, amenities and infrastructure significantly. The contiguous campus now extends over six home communities – the City of Ithaca, the Town of Ithaca, the Village of Cayuga Heights, the Town of Dryden, the Village of Lansing and the Town of Lansing – all within Tompkins County. The nature of adjacent land uses varies, from dense residential urban neighborhoods and historic districts to suburban and semi-rural residential communities. Both the rural and urban environments within which Cornell sits require that

the university look outward as well as inward as it plans for the future, carefully considering the impact of future development on the surrounding communities, particularly at the edges of campus.



The campus master plan assumes the university will add 3-4 million gross square feet (GSF) of development to the campus in the next 30 years but provides a framework and identifies development areas that could accommodate more than that.

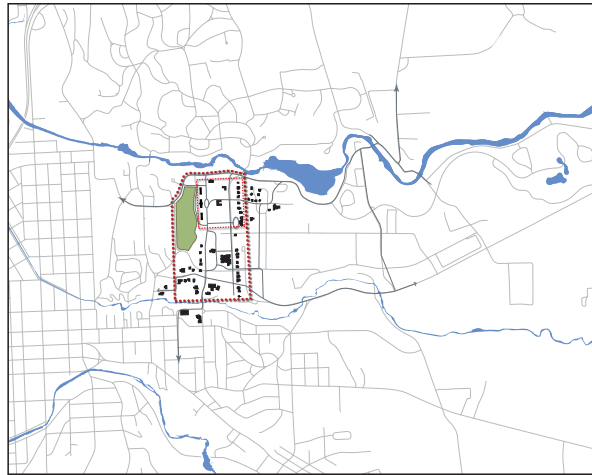


Brief history of campus development

The history of Cornell's development can be divided into five periods, each associated with a distinct pattern of growth and physical development. Each consecutive image shows the pattern of development over each period in history, highlighting the changing footprint of campus buildings and open spaces over time.

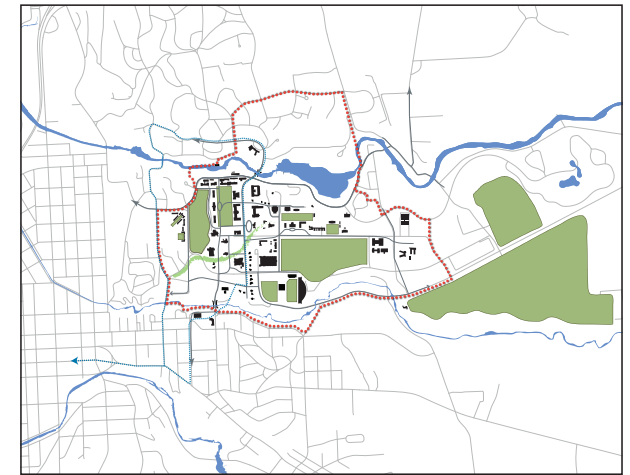


1864 – 1900: The University on the Hill



When Ezra Cornell offered his 206 acre farm for a new university, the high plateau above Ithaca, now the location of the Arts Quad, was selected as its home. This area contained all of Cornell's academic buildings and professors housing, and was rapidly formalized through landscaping and road construction. The campus began as it is today: a diverse collection of unique buildings unified by the strong character of the landscape.

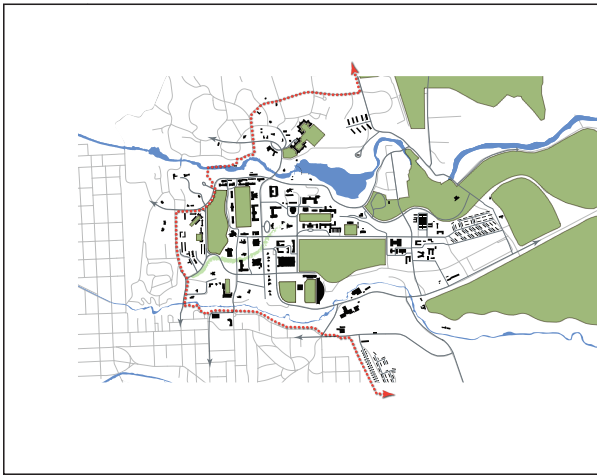
1900 – 1925: The First Great Expansion



As Cornell grew in size and stature, its building footprint extended outward from the Arts Quad. Protecting the open space now known as Alumni Fields, a cluster of buildings were located far to the east, near Judd Falls Road. Surrounding communities reflected Cornell's expansion, growing outward to the western and southern boundary of Cornell's lands, and an electric streetcar line was extended through the center of campus.

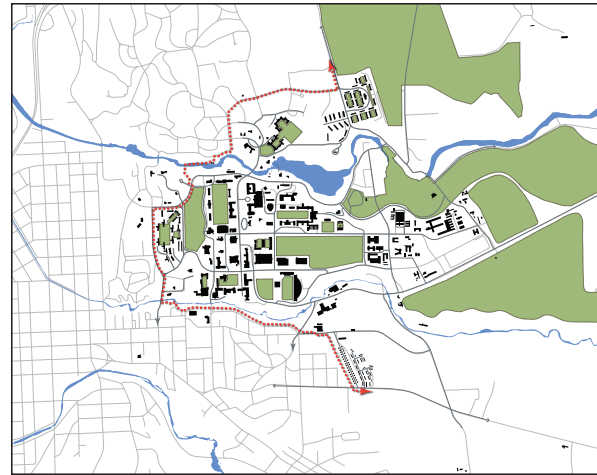
The result of Cornell's 140+ years of physical evolution is a rich legacy of historic buildings and open spaces. Together, these structures and spaces, along with other highly-valued buildings and open spaces, begin to establish the template for the campus's future development.

1925 – 1950: Moving to the Edges



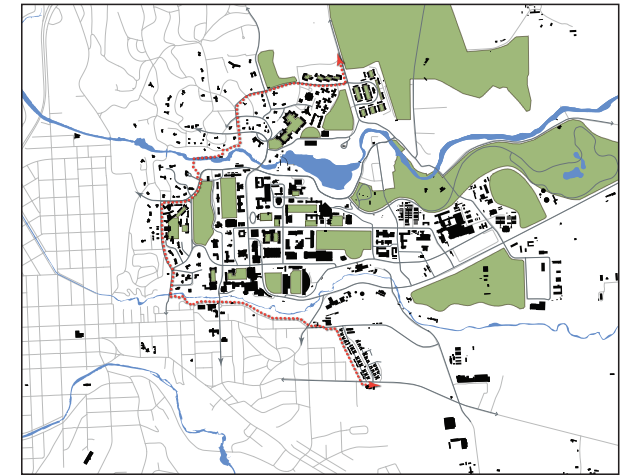
During this period, campus development was focused on managing transportation, creating discrete zones on campus based on academic disciplines, and preserving important buildings and landscapes. The war changed the nature of activities on campus, leading to a high demand for space at the periphery of campus to accommodate temporary housing. The original campus was beginning to reach its capacity, with focus shifted to redeveloping portions of the “lower campus” south of Wee Stinky Glen.

1950 – 1965: Science and Technology Boom



The end of the war brought with it increased funding for science and technical programs. This supported the College of Engineering's move to a new quad from its previous home in the Arts Quad. Significant growth was also seen in the physical sciences precinct and the Ag Quad, as well as the Vet College, which moved to its current location. Much of the “lower campus” was redeveloped into what we experience today, and Cornell continued to invest in on-campus housing.

1965 – 2005: Intensification and Dispersal



With most of Central Campus built out, this period has been characterized by intensification of academic uses in the area between the gorges. A dwindling supply of prime development land has prompted academic units to discover increasingly creative means to add space to their respective precincts. Conversely, non-academic uses have been pushed out to surrounding areas, including Downtown Ithaca and East Hill Plaza. The recent North Campus and West Campus Initiatives saw significant growth and improvement in campus housing.

Most of the physical qualities of the campus and special places Cornellians hold dear have been in place for more than 75 years. Since about 1930, when this photograph was taken, the campus has intensified and expanded around many of the legacy landscapes, streets and buildings that existed back then, with few “new” iconic open spaces and buildings added. The task for the campus master plan was to outline new moves that protect the highly valued elements of campus and create new legacy places that will define the campus through the 21st century.



What people value most about Cornell's campus today



Outstanding Teaching and Research Facilities



The Natural Setting



Open Spaces and Vistas



Community



Serendipity



Healthy Neighborhoods



Proximity and Walkability



Architectural Variety

Perspectives on the campus at the beginning of the 21st century

There is no better way to understand the Cornell campus than to talk to the people who live and work here. Between March and October 2006, over 400 people representing all facets of the campus and surrounding communities were consulted. Students, faculty, staff, the university leadership, alumni, neighbors and civic officials were all interviewed. From these interviews emerged twelve themes that capture shared values, concerns and wishes for the campus and played a fundamental role in shaping the campus master plan.

1. The campus is much loved.

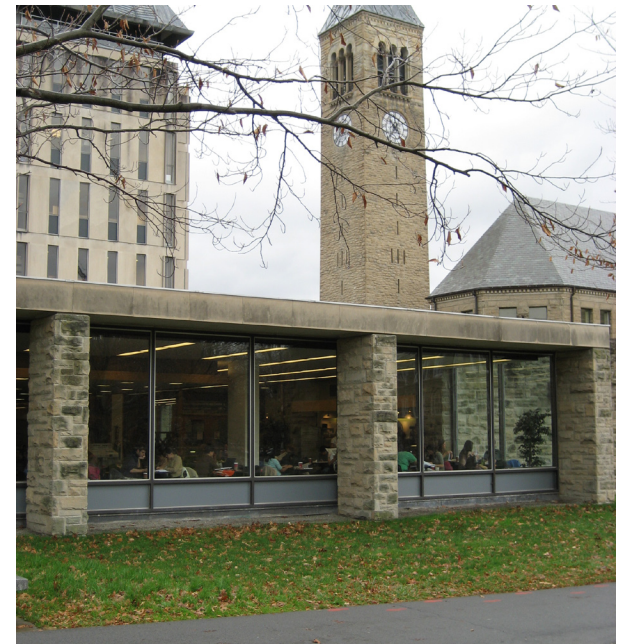
- Despite problems, it is a great and beautiful campus.
- There are many cherished places, and new common areas have been successful.
- Signature open spaces remain, and the views are spectacular.
- The natural setting is without compare.

2. Campus development is generally meeting the critical needs for new academic and research facilities.

- Duffield Hall, the Life Sciences and Physical Sciences buildings, the Animal Health Diagnostic Center and the Gates building will help keep the affected programs at the leading edge.
- The libraries are adapting well to academic, social and technological trends.

3. Campus development is not meeting the demand for general teaching, other cross-disciplinary and social spaces.

- Another large common lecture hall and performance space is needed.
- A flexible, centrally-located shared classroom building would solve shortages for several units.
- Social Sciences should have a central home.
- Needed lounge space is being re-purposed or cut from projects.



4. Everybody wants to be at or close to the heart of campus.

- A tight-knit campus facilitates cross-disciplinary teaching and research.
- Seemingly academically-isolated units benefit from proximity to other colleges and the Core Campus setting.
- Animal and plant researchers need to interact with students and other faculty.
- Being central has ensured athletics and physical education play an integral role in the Cornell experience.
- Being among students and faculty is important to the quality of worklife for staff.

5. The campus is becoming more connected and integrated academically but not physically and socially.

- The physical disparity between the endowed and contract sides is becoming more visible to more people.
- Cross-campus walking and cycling are more necessary but infrastructure improvements have not kept pace.
- Academic units nurture community, but there are few events or spaces that bring together larger, diverse groups or the entire Cornell community.

6. The quality of the campus is at risk.

- Intensification—by buildings, buses and cars—is perceived by many to be diminishing the character of campus.

- The issue of deferred maintenance, of buildings and infrastructure, is coming to a head—East Campus, particularly CALS, is most in need of investment.
- Many buildings are obsolete and will need to be substantially renovated or replaced within the planning horizon.
- Treasured open spaces and buildings in and around Central Campus need to be carefully protected.
- Poor lighting makes the campus feel unsafe at night.

7. Most undergraduates are satisfied with their housing options, but the quantity and quality of graduate housing is a problem.

- The North Campus and West Campus housing initiatives have been successful; the fraternities and sororities are an attractive option for sophomores; Collegetown lacks amenities but is the preferred place to live for most upper classmen/women.
- There is demand for many more on-campus units for both undergraduate and graduate students today.
- Many graduate students can only find decent affordable housing in outlying areas.
- Hasbrouck works well for families but is otherwise unattractive, and Maplewood needs to be replaced with better quality housing.



8. Demographic shifts and evolving work/study habits are increasing demand for new amenities and support services.

- Younger faculty and older students are seeking a range of commercial amenities on or close to campus.
- There is a lack of amenities, namely food, for students and faculty on campus late in the day and evening.
- The planned child care center will meet an urgent need for infant and toddler spaces, and a second facility will soon be needed.

9. The visitor experience needs improvement.

- The main approaches to campus are not inviting, and there is not a sense of arrival for those coming from the east or south.
- Cornell needs a welcome center.
- Visitor parking is limited and hard to find, which deters locals and tourists.

10. Cornell could do more to enhance the neighborhoods and the health of the Ithaca region.

- Cornell is doing much to achieve environmental sustainability, but it's not all being recognized and there is more to be done.
- Cornell-generated traffic is perceived to be getting worse in areas surrounding the campus.

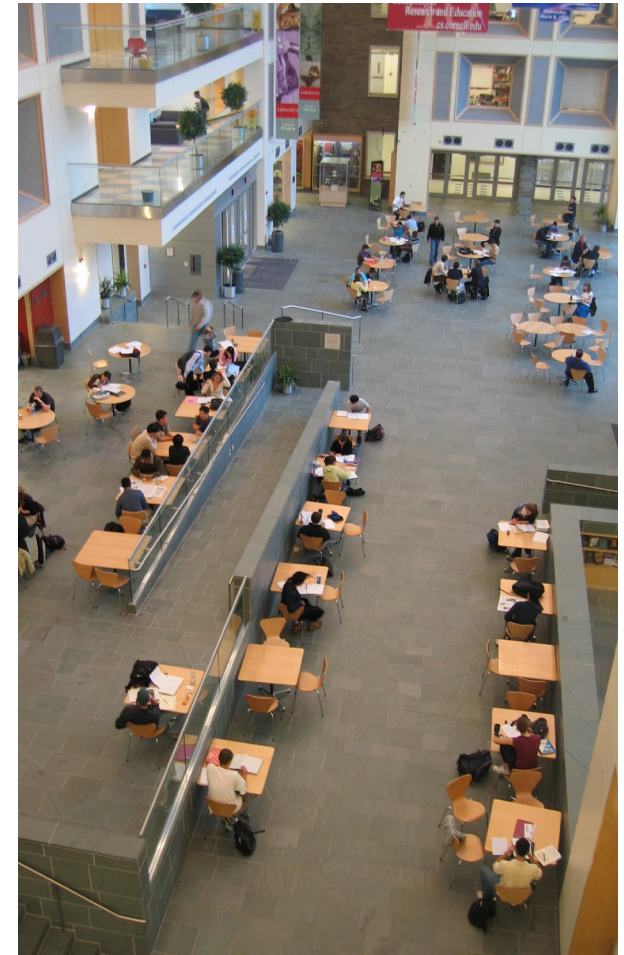
- A greater Cornell presence in Downtown Ithaca is strongly encouraged.
- Collegetown needs help—rehabilitation, beautification and parking.

11. Cornell's capital funding priorities and models do not fully address contemporary issues.

- The different levels of investment between the endowed and contract colleges hinder efforts to unify and better connect the campus.
- East Campus will require proportionally greater investment in infrastructure, legacy buildings and landscapes to minimize inequities with Central Campus.
- Infrastructure and “inter-structure” (e.g., social spaces) do not have natural advocates nor funding models.

12. Cornell needs an effective campus plan and more inclusive planning processes.

- A long-range, holistic vision of the campus is needed.
- Projects are planned incrementally, without benefit of the big picture.
- Environmental health and safety, support facilities and green initiatives are not consistently factored into planning and design decisions (or are cut out).
- Decentralization and incrementalism results in inefficiencies and ongoing town-gown conflicts.



2.5

Key challenges

In addressing the broad range of issues and opportunities facing the campus, the campus planning process sought to balance various interests and resolve existing or potential conflicts among the different voices on campus and in the larger community. While there were many challenges to resolve, the following were the most significant:

- **Locate as many university functions as possible on or close to Central Campus without compromising the highly valued sense of openness.**
- **Accommodate future large academic buildings while maintaining the fine-grain fabric of open spaces and paths.**
- **Balance land uses in East Campus, recognizing the pressures on Central Campus but also the strong desire to retain existing athletic fields, greenhouses, animal facilities and parking lots.**
- **Find the best proximate locations for low-intensity uses like athletics fields, greenhouses and barns displaced from the core.**
- **Find the best way to identify and protect good locations for facilities that will fulfill the growing need for employee amenities and social spaces, given the priority typically assigned to academic space in central locations.**
- **Make the most of strategic lands in the East Hill Plaza and strengthen Downtown and Collegetown.**
- **Grow the campus without adversely affecting surrounding neighborhoods.**



