

The University of Utah has ambitious plans to expand student **housing** in the next five years — and getting there will take some creativity and a lot of financing.

U. **President Taylor Randall** talked about his goals — which include nearly doubling the number of students who live on campus by 2027 — for the first time in detail this week. That would mean roughly 11,000 students in dorms; that's about a quarter of the student population.

Randall, who initially mentioned the idea in his inauguration speech, called the proposal "definitely doable" and described the U.'s campus becoming like its own little city within Salt Lake City, where students live and work and exercise and hang out. He wants to see the U. become less of a commuter school.

"It's not just the beds," added Sean Grube, the executive director over **housing** at the university. "It's how we make sure students have a wonderful experience on campus, as well."

On Tuesday, **Randall** and Grube spoke about the next two dorm buildings that will be constructed on campus. Those projects will require nearly a half billion dollars in bonding, which got the initial OK from the U.'s board of trustees. But the price of the dorms, themselves, **Randall** insisted, will remain affordable.

Randall also briefly updated the board on the two projects currently in the works that are set to add about 1,500 beds between them.

This year, until it can meet the demand for more residence halls, the school is having students live in the campus hotel and with alumni. Those "more innovative" approaches, the school has said, are temporary.

But the alternative options have helped whittle the waiting list down from more than 3,000 students to zero, for the time being, as the blistering real estate and rental market adds to the pressure to find **housing** near campus.

Here's a breakdown of the U.'s **housing** plan and what new dorms will be coming online next.

Adding more dorms above the basketball arena

The U. is proposing adding additional dorms to the east of the Huntsman Center.

They would be built where the U. recently demolished the outdated Annex building, which was built in 1942 and was deteriorating. It was torn down in the summer of 2021. The dorms would also overlap onto the parking lot nearby, so to alleviate that concern, a parking garage will be built under the new residence hall, said Robin Burr, the chief facilities officer at the U.

The dorms here would sit next to the newest dorms on campus at Kahlert Village, which houses about 1,000 first-year students in different themed cohorts. Those include honors students, science students and health and wellness scholars. That village, too, will be expanded by 400 beds by fall 2023.

There is also the nearby Marriott Honors Community, a dorm with more than 300 beds for upper-division honors students.

The newest residence hall to replace the Annex, according to the initial plans, would house more than 1,100 students and stretch up to nine stories. The expectation is for that to open in fall 2025.

It is expected to cost more than \$233 million. The university intends to bond for that money — which will next require approval from the Utah Board of Higher Education and the Utah Legislature.

The university has bonded an estimated 15 times in the last nine years. The projects all include some kind of

revenue that is used to repay the bond — with **housing**, the cost is later recovered through rent.

Expanding the Shoreline dorms on upper campus

This project, too, would be covered by bonding and is expected to cost more than \$148 million. Together, with the Annex project, the total bond amount would be \$382 million — or approaching half a billion dollars.

These dorms would be built by the existing Shoreline Ridge residence halls on the Bonneville Shoreline Trail that runs on the eastern-most border of campus.

It's anticipated to provide about 850 beds and open in fall 2026.

The original Shoreline dorms were built prior to the 2002 Olympics in Salt Lake City to help house athletes. There are currently six buildings as part of that community that houses upper-division students.

This area on upper campus has the majority of student **housing**, including Benchmark Plaza, Sage Point, Gateway Heights, Chapel Glen and Officers Circle.

New business school **housing** under construction

The David Eccles School of Business broke ground last month on "live and learn community" for students.

There will be six stories of **housing** located east of the Lasonde Studios, which houses entrepreneurship students. It will open in fall 2024 with beds for 775 students.

A homebuilder and the LDS Church partner on new dorm

In a unique setup that has also broken ground, the Ivory University House is set to house 552 students, with the first rooms opening up next year.

The project came out of a special land deal to replace the aging Latter-day Saint chapel that was on campus. That land is owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The church will essentially donate the land for 99 years, in what's known as a ground lease. The Clark and Christine Ivory Trust is funding the building and will privately own the finished dorms.

That puts the **housing** in a unique place. Though run under the same general rules as other U. residential halls, there will be additional restrictions.

Bans on smoking, drug use and overnight guests will be in place, similar to other dorms, but the property will be operated by a manager. Students eligible to live in the studio apartments will sign yearlong leases. Three-quarters of them will pay market-rate rents, while the other quarter will receive **housing** stipends and other aid.

The project will sit in the high-traffic intersection of South Campus Drive and Mario Capecchi Drive.

Between the two proposed dorms and the two under construction, the U. will have about 3,000 more beds on campus. It will look for additional spaces to build more to hit the goal of having 5,000 more students living on campus.

Using the university's hotel

Currently, 280 students are living at the University Guest House, a hotel on campus that is usually meant for visiting parents or visiting speakers.

The university decided to use that space as makeshift dorms this year as more students applied for campus **housing** than ever before. There are 4,800 students living on campus — including in the hotel — right now.

Having alumni house students

The U. unveiled a pilot program this fall to have students live with alumni.

U. spokesperson Shawn Wood said nine students have been placed in houses this fall. In the spring, 25 will be living with alumni.

The school had initially hoped the "Home Away from Home" program would accommodate 100 students; but the goal was lowered at the request of **President Randall**.

Alumni must live within a 25-mile radius of the U. to participate, and there is an extensive screening process, the U. has previously said.

Students pay a flat rate of \$2,600 per semester for the **housing** program. And that money is passed onto the alumni who participate.

That price drop came at the request of alumni after some pushback over the initial price of \$5,000. By comparison, a single room in one of the older halls on campus is \$3,847 for fall semester; a single room in the newer Kahlert Village is \$4,659. Most students living on campus in dorms also choose meal plans that cost between \$3,400 and \$5,000 for the academic year.

Grube, the director of **housing**, said with that program and with all **housing** on the U. "the affordability piece is central to the discussion." Christian Gardner, the chair of the board of trustees, cautioned the U. not to exceed student means with the **housing** options.

Including amenities is great, he said, in the dorms, but these are still students that don't have full-time jobs. Likewise, he said, there should be robust discussion on what to set rent at for the new dorms — to balance repaying the bond and not overly taxing students.

Leasing additional space from Westminster College

This fall, the U. also leased some additional dorm space from nearby Westminster College.

The university is contracted to use The Draw, a 162-bed apartment building at 2100 South and 1300 East in Sugar House. It will have the space for the next five years while the new dorms are being built on campus.

Wood said there are a few vacancies there, but the property is close to full occupancy.

Westminster has said it is meeting its enrollment goals and doesn't currently need that space.

Fixing up graduate and family **housing**

The U. is also work to remodel and rehab the existing West Village and East Village **housing** on upper campus for graduate students and families. That started earlier this year.

Burr, the chief facilities officer at the U., said this won't add additional **housing** to campus. But it will make it more livable and enticing.

The village **housing** was built in 1960, and the buildings are showing significant signs of wear and tear with age.

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Tanner, Courtney. "This is the University of Utah's plan to get 5,000 more students living on campus - Two more dorms are proposed and two are under construction for the Salt Lake City campus.." *Salt Lake Tribune, The (UT)*, sec. News, 13 Oct. 2022. *NewsBank: Access World News - Historical and Current*, infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/18D2470AB2200FD0. Accessed 19 Oct. 2022.