

2014 VCU Department of Residential Life and Housing

HOUSING MASTER PLAN



VCU

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

2014 VCU Department of Residential Life and Housing

HOUSING MASTER PLAN

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INTRODUCTION



Scope

In 2014, Virginia Commonwealth University's Department of Residential Life and Housing, within the Division of Student Affairs, developed a Housing Master Plan for the Monroe Park Campus and MCV Campus. They engaged a consultant team including BCWH Architects (facilities condition assessment), Ayers Saint Gross (master planning and design), and Brailsford & Dunlavey (market demand and financial analysis) to work with the university to create the plan.

The Housing Master Plan offers a holistic assessment of VCU's housing programs and facilities, incorporating analysis of existing conditions including:

- market demand assessment,
- analysis of financial performance,
- evaluation of program spaces in existing halls, and
- facilities condition evaluation.

The Housing Master Plan proposes changes to the physical housing stock that align the residential experience with the university's strategic initiatives around student success outlined in the Quest for Distinction.

This plan synthesizes the results of in-depth analysis to identify top priorities for the Department of Residential Life and Housing and articulates a vision for the housing system that achieves each of the priorities. One of the guiding principles throughout the master planning process was to align housing facilities and programs with the goals of Quest for Distinction. The residential experience plays a critical role in achieving these objectives, and the plan will serve as a road map and decision-making tool over a 15-year planning horizon.

Based on a financial assessment of the housing system, the plan sets forth a phasing strategy that identifies a sequence of individual projects that can be implemented over time without compromising the health of the system.

Process

The university established a Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee with broad representation including leaders, administrators, and staff from the Department of Residential Life and Housing (RL&H) and the university as a whole. A full list of committee participation is included in the Acknowledgements section. Their input guided the Housing Master Plan process through four phases of work that began with an intensive data gathering and engagement effort and ended by producing a detailed phasing plan to guide the university in implementing the vision for campus residential life.



The site capacity assessment explored many different locations for new housing.

1. DATA GATHERING AND ENGAGEMENT

During the initial phase of the Housing Master Plan process, the consultant team collected information about existing housing facilities, RL&H programs, residential culture, student preferences, and university vision to establish a shared platform of understanding for the planning process. The Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee participated in a Strategic Asset Value (SAV) session to clearly articulate their vision for how housing should support the university's larger mission on both the Monroe Park Campus and the MCV Campus.

The team gathered broad insight into the current residential experience at VCU and student preferences through focus groups and surveying. Focus groups held in February 2014 brought together groups of students living in freshman halls, living-learning communities, on-campus apartments, and off-campus housing, as well as a group of resident advisors, to discuss why they chose their living situation and the positive and negative aspects of the experience. Forty-two students participated in these focus groups. A survey released to the entire VCU student body asked students to reflect on their current housing experience and to select their preferred housing arrangement given certain assumed costs. More than 2,000 students completed the web-based survey between February 12th and 23rd, 2014, resulting in a +/- 2.2% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval. Survey respondents were demographically representative of the VCU community with no areas of significant variance. Of all respondents, approximately 1,000 lived off campus during the 2013-2014 year. Full documentation of the SAV session and the survey results is included in the appendices, which are provided separately.

Finally, the consultant team toured and analyzed existing residence halls to assess the condition of the facilities and the extent to which their physical layout supports the programmatic objectives of RL&H. They also assessed rental rates, campus proximity, and amenities at more than 50 off-campus rental properties targeted at VCU students to understand the full set of options available to students when choosing where to live.

The result of this assessment was a clear articulation of the top priorities RL&H wants to address through the Housing Master Plan.

2. MARKET DEMAND AND SITE CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

Based on this analysis, the consultant team worked with the university to define the target market for on-campus housing from a demographic and financial perspective. Within this target market, survey results were used to project the market demand for each unit type of on-campus housing. Working with the Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee, the raw demand was refined to reflect

a desired policy that all freshmen would live in specific unit types that have been shown to support student success. This resulted in a target unit count and mix for each campus.

Simultaneously, the team identified potential sites for new VCU-sponsored housing development based on the Master Site Plan for the university. Assessing the capacity of each site for new residential development generated a broad set of options to meet the target unit count and mix. This assessment yielded a range of capacity on each site depending on the unit typology selected because some unit types require more square footage per resident than others. The assessment also calculated the optimal housing capacity for existing residence halls. The result often meant lowering the bed capacity of existing halls due to the need for additional shared social spaces in halls with unit configurations appropriate for lower-division students. The community building that takes place in these spaces supports retention, maturation, and graduation.

3. SCENARIO PLANNING

Working with the Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee, the team explored several different scenarios that align the housing inventory with the target unit count and mix through a combination of demolition, new construction, and renovation projects. Renovation proposals addressed issues identified by the facilities condition assessment and assumed that renovations would add more social space to appropriately support community-building, thereby reducing housing capacity. The scenarios added new residence halls elsewhere on campus to make up for capacity lost to renovation or demolition.

The scenarios explored different approaches to arranging various types of housing on the campus to create larger communities of residence halls. Ultimately, the committee endorsed one preferred approach that was incorporated into the Housing Master Plan.

4. PHASING AND IMPLEMENTATION

In the final stage of the planning process, the Housing Master Plan Committee worked with the consultant team to develop a phasing strategy that achieves the preferred scenario while addressing RL&H's top priorities as quickly as possible. The phasing plan reconciles physical availability of sites, reasonable construction timelines, provision of adequate housing capacity each year, and financial performance of the housing system to ensure the system remains solvent in each year of implementation.



RESIDENTIAL LIFE & HOUSING GOALS



DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENTIAL LIFE AND HOUSING

VISION

Residential Life & Housing at VCU will be a premier urban, public, on-campus community providing a one-of-a-kind residential experience.

MISSION

Residential Life & Housing at VCU provides safe, inclusive, and well-maintained facilities where we build intentional communities to empower residents in their academic excellence, citizenship, and personal growth.

VALUES

Collaboration

We value the exchange of ideas and solutions through internal and external partnerships.

Inclusion & Diversity

We value celebration, exploration, and understanding among people, ideas, and culture.

Resident Centered

We value and recognize that our residents are at the core of our mission and practices.

Learning

We value academic and personal success for all students.

Excellence

We value the individual and collective pursuit of exceptional practice in our work and relationships.

Quest for Distinction

In 2010, the Board of Visitors adopted Quest for Distinction, a strategic plan for VCU. It embodies the university's distinctive commitment to simultaneously advancing knowledge and student success. The Department of Residential Life and Housing (RL&H) envisions the residential experience playing a central role in achieving the strategic initiatives around student success set forth in Quest for Distinction because of the significant impact housing can have in this area. The department's vision, mission, and values reflect this alignment with the university strategic plan.

The Impact Of Housing

The Housing Master Plan is structured around the belief that contemporary residence halls should support recruitment and retention and promote student success. The residential experience should act as a competitive amenity that contributes to the university's brand and creates a positive impression of the campus beginning with the campus tour. With increased awareness that significant student learning takes place outside the classroom and as a result of relationships, the planning and design of residential facilities focuses on creating environments that foster connections and learning opportunities. When residence halls promote community-building, students create stronger, long-term ties with each other and the institution.

Age-Appropriate Residential Experience

Research shows students are most likely to succeed in their academic endeavors when provided age-appropriate residential experiences that offer increased privacy and autonomy as they mature. When students first arrive on campus, making multiple connections to other students, faculty, and staff is critical to successfully transitioning to college life. Traditional-style halls where residents must leave their room for most of their daily activities provide opportunities to meet diverse people and foster interpersonal interactions that build relationships. Unlike other campus activities, students do not need special skills or training to belong to a hall community. Building relationships with peers and mentors (such as resident advisors) helps students develop the habits they need to succeed in college and in life. As they progress and mature, students have more established relationships. They need less community space and more independence in their living configuration to support continued growth. To achieve this objective, campuses must develop a housing stock that consists of a mix of unit types aligned with the age of students they house on their campus. The correct housing inventory and programming can support the developmental needs of VCU students as they progress from their first year to graduation.

The Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee endorsed an age-appropriate housing model for VCU. In this model, freshmen who choose to live on campus would live in either traditional or semi-suite units. Sophomores, juniors, and seniors would live in unit types that offer progressively more independence. Currently, there is no requirement that students of any age live on campus, and that would continue to be the case. The model is described in more detail in the Programmatic Effectiveness section of the next chapter.

Residential Vision for the Monroe Park and MCV Campuses

As one of the first steps in the planning process, the master planning team facilitated a Strategic Asset Value (SAV) workshop with the Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee. They discussed independent strategic objectives and how housing should support the mission and vision of the university on each campus. The Monroe Park Campus is the primary venue for undergraduate activity, while the MCV Campus is a hub for patient care, health sciences, and medicine, primarily at the graduate and professional levels. While RL&H's physical and programmatic manifestation may differ based on the target campus population, they must support recruitment and retention of quality students and provide a student-centric experience on both campuses.

On the Monroe Park Campus, the university aspires to maximize undergraduate participation in on-campus housing within feasible financial parameters, with a particular focus on the recruitment and retention of freshmen and sophomores. RL&H intends to accomplish this objective by:

- providing high-quality facilities and programs that fortify and illustrate the university's brand as an academically progressive, student-centric, urban institution; and,
- helping to create community on campus through connections with the university's other quality-of-life resources (e.g., University Student Commons, Cary Street Gym, Shafer Dining Court Center).

On the MCV Campus, VCU aspires to provide market-responsive housing to interested graduate and professional students, where unit type and price align with identified demand and financial feasibility. Housing on the MCV Campus should be located proximate to the quality-of-life and academic resources, like the Larrick Student Center, to fully maximize potential benefits related to safety, convenience, and community.



Currently, some first year students live on the MCV Campus while taking classes on the Monroe Park Campus. This does not align with the vision for either campus: those students should participate in the Monroe Park Campus residential experience, with MCV Campus housing capacity targeting graduate and professional students.

Strategic Drivers of the Housing Master Plan

The Quest for Distinction provided the foundation for identifying VCU's strategic drivers for the Housing Master Plan. Quantifying and categorizing the results of the SAV work session summarized the university's desired approach to the planning and implementation of an enhanced residential experience on campus. Specifically, highlighting gaps between current conditions and desired optimal conditions revealed areas that need the most immediate attention. This assessment is documented in the appendices.

The Housing Master Plan will elevate RL&H's influence in recruiting and retaining students at VCU through enhanced facilities and more impactful programs. The overall quality, configuration, and positioning of VCU's existing residence halls detract from the on-campus residential experience and limit the university's ability to leverage housing as a key student recruitment tool. Rebalancing of the university's housing inventory to address quality, configuration, and location is required to propel the university towards its aspirational outcomes.



RECRUITMENT / CAMPUS TOUR IMPACT / COMPETITIVE AMENITY

VCU's residential facilities must have a positive influence on prospective students' decision-making processes with regard to attending the university. Currently, a significant portion of the university's residence halls do not deliver a compelling story about the positive role of residential life as part of the overall student experience. To support the university's goal of increasing its competitive profile for highly-qualified, geographically-diverse incoming students, on-campus residential facilities must provide a competitive, "value-added" amenity when compared to peer institutions. The prospect of a holistic academic, social, and co-curricular experience within an urban environment should be the brand and appeal of the university for these targeted candidates.

CAMPUS COMMUNITY CREATION

The Department of Residential Life and Housing, in conjunction with other student-focused organizations on campus, must provide opportunities for residents and non-residents to engage in co-curricular experiences that augment



their academic pursuits and enhance their overall experience at VCU. Currently, the programming efforts are being hindered by the size, amount, and variety of multipurpose and community event spaces available within residence halls, specifically those residence halls where first-year students live. For example, staff who must hold meetings in an elevator vestibule rather than an appropriately sized and located floor lounge cannot fully develop programs that interest and engage students. Additionally, the uneven distribution of available meeting spaces across the university's housing system creates challenges for both professional and student staff to create a consistent experience for on-campus residents. RL&H aspires to provide a one-of-a-kind residential experience that challenges students to grow as young adults, establish new friendships, expand their understanding of different people and cultures, and succeed in their academic pursuits.

QUALITY-OF-LIFE SYSTEM INTEGRATION

In support of its transition to a residential campus, VCU aspires to offer students a multi-dimensional, co-curricular experience that is unique to the university and capitalizes on the substantial social infrastructure that is currently in place. Specifically, RL&H desires an increased physical and programmatic between residence halls and other quality-of-life assets. Collectively, these activities can have a synergistic impact on student experience. Currently, the co-location of all quality-of-life facilities within a centralized student life quad is difficult due to limited available real estate and the unique composition of the university's urban campuses. In the past, decisions regarding the siting of various quality-of-life amenities had been heavily influenced by the location of available land. From both a programmatic and facilities perspective, the vision is to more closely tie RL&H activities and facilities into broader social infrastructure of the campus. This will help create a branded and unique VCU experience that enhances residential life and bolsters the quality and variety of co-curricular opportunities for all students.

ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING HOUSING IMPACT



2.77 > 2.52

At VCU, freshmen who live on campus have a higher grade-point average than those that do not.

2.99 > 2.75

At VCU, sophomores who live on campus have a higher grade-point average than those that do not.

(Statistics based on Fall 2014 data)

Programmatic Effectiveness

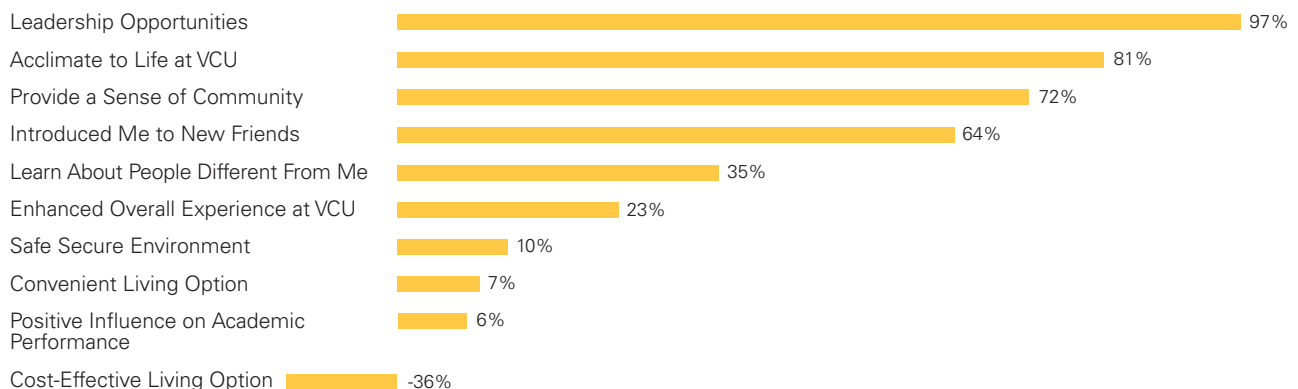
VCU's housing program is impactful: Housing Master Plan survey results show that students living on-campus are more engaged than those living off-campus. They have a stronger sense of community, are better acclimated to the college environment, benefit from more developed friendships, and have a more positive overall experience. At VCU, freshmen and sophomores who live on campus have higher grade-point averages than those that do not (2.77 as compared to 2.52 for freshmen and 2.99 as compared to 2.75 for sophomores in Fall 2014). On-campus housing has increased in popularity. Occupancy rates have increased to nearly 100%, and Residential Life and Housing surveys show significant increases in overall satisfaction. However, the Housing Master Plan's assessment of existing housing facilities revealed instances where the residential experience does not align with the university's strategic goals.

The Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee endorsed an age-appropriate model for housing that supports student success and growth. In this approach, living configurations intentionally align with maturity, offering progressively more independence to older students.

The Housing Master Plan process assessed the extent to which existing residence halls align with this model by analyzing the inventory of different unit types and the amount of space devoted to community-building within each residence hall.

The committee further prioritized the freshman and sophomore experience because of the significant potential impact of a positive residential experience on student success in those first two years. The urban context surrounding the campus supports private development that provides additional off-campus housing options that are well-suited to older students. This reduces the amount

Relative Impact of VCU Housing
Students who live on campus
are more likely to say their living
environment provides the following:





Floor Lounges in Freshman Halls at VCU



Building Lounges in Freshman Halls at VCU

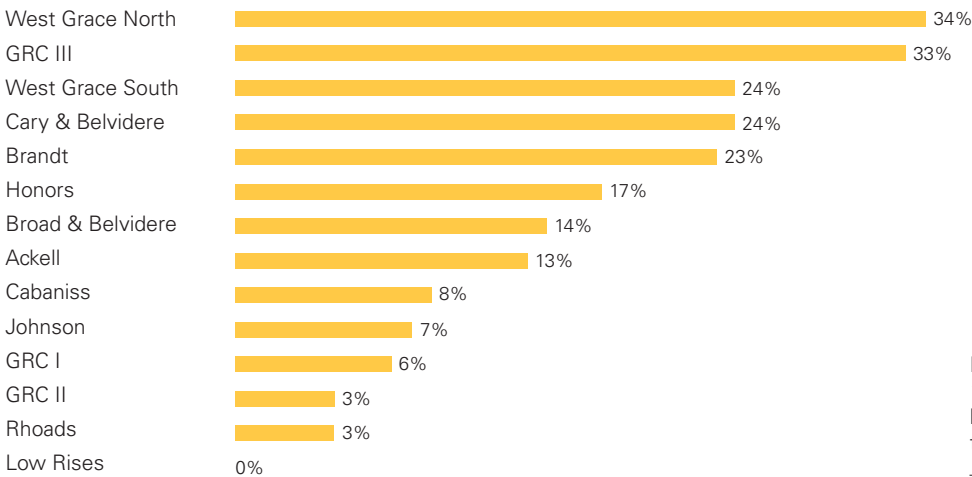
of housing the university must provide and facilitates the focus on freshmen and sophomores. Moreover, the assessment of existing housing confirmed that the university's recent investments in campus apartments and living-learning communities have created a strong on-campus residential experience for upper-division students. The assessment highlights that by comparison, the freshman and sophomore experience is imbalanced relative to the quality of what is provided for older VCU students and for their peers at other institutions. Focus group participants mentioned community bathrooms, temperature control, quality community gathering space, and laundry facilities as key areas for improvement. The Housing Master Plan presents an opportunity to create an excellent residential experience for these students while addressing facilities condition liabilities. Residence halls receiving the lowest satisfaction scores in the survey are responsible for a large portion of deferred maintenance and capital renewal needs identified by the Facilities Condition Assessment.



Floor Lounges in Freshman Halls at Other Institutions



Building Lounges in Freshman Halls at Other Institutions



Percentage of Residents who are "Very Satisfied" with their current living arrangement relative to housing they are aware of at other institutions

UNIT TYPES

The assessment established four general categories of residence hall unit types. Traditional hall-style configurations have double or single bedrooms that open directly onto a corridor. Residents use shared bathrooms and eat and socialize in communal spaces. Optimally, each residential community within the building has its own dedicated lounge. To accommodate these functions, traditional halls require a greater percentage of space dedicated to community-building. This configuration provides residents with plentiful opportunities to build relationships with diverse peers and resident advisors, which promotes academic success. As a result, they are particularly appropriate for first-year students making the transition to college.

Semi-suite units are similar to traditional hall-style units except that bathrooms are located within the unit and shared between two rooms. As residents do not have living or dining areas within their private living space, these halls still require significant amounts of space outside the unit devoted to community-building. Within the age-appropriate housing model, both freshmen and sophomores are well-suited to live in these units.

Suites incorporate both a bathroom and living area within a unit with several single or double bedrooms. With private living areas, fewer social spaces are needed within the building. Sophomores and juniors, who generally have more established social networks and need less access to support, are typically well-suited to this type of residential experience.

Apartments include a kitchen in addition to bathroom and living area. On-campus apartment buildings often include some community spaces and offer access to resources like resident advisors, but the overall percentage of space devoted to community-building is significantly lower than other unit typologies. These units are most appropriate for juniors or seniors as they develop independent living habits.

The age-appropriate housing model is not a prescriptive model that all students must follow but suggests that typically, students would move along the spectrum of residential options throughout their time at the institution. Individual residence halls may include more than one unit type to provide students with increased choice and diversify the residential community. These choices would correspond with individual student needs related to personal development and learning environment needs for academic success.



In traditional and semi-suite units, many of residents' daily activities take place outside their unit, encouraging them to interact with their community.



Traditional



Semi-suite: adds bath



Suite: adds living space



Apartment: adds kitchen



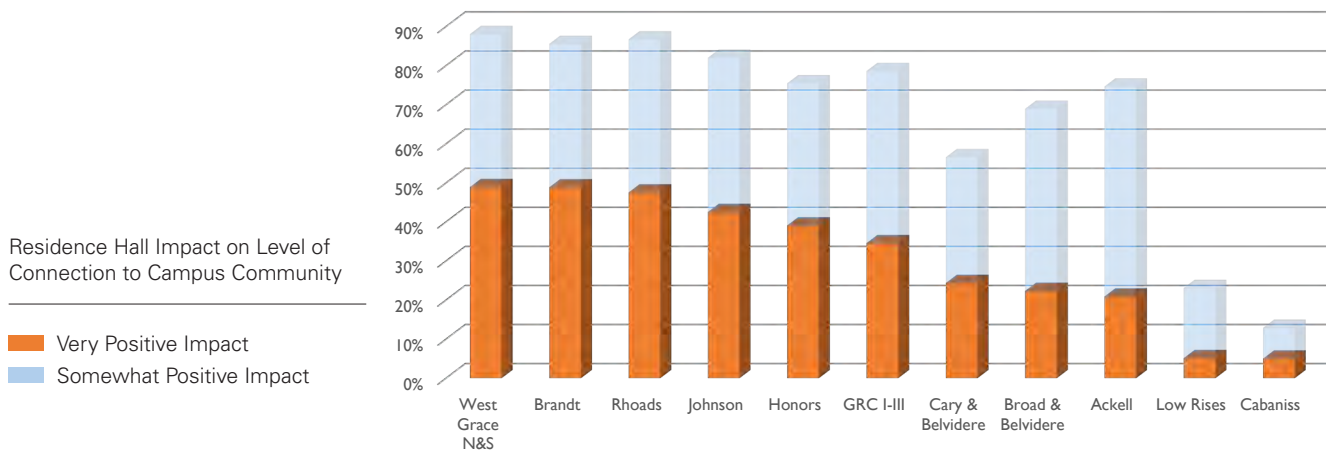
Community Oriented

Student Independence

HOUSING LOCATION AND MIX

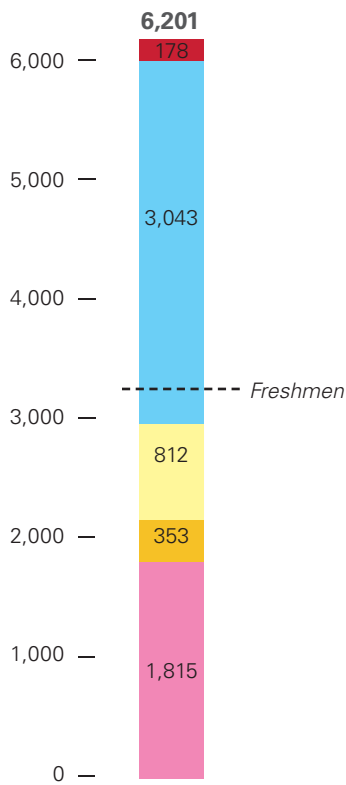
The Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee established a goal that all freshmen who choose to live on campus would live in either traditional or semi-suite unit configurations to provide a supportive environment. Currently, the university does not have enough inventory of these unit types on the Monroe Park Campus to house the approximately 3,200 freshmen who choose to live on campus each year. As a result, approximately 400 freshmen students live in traditional-style units in Cabaniss Hall on the MCV Campus. Survey results and focus group feedback affirmed that residence hall location impacts levels of engagement. Students living in the central area of the Monroe Park Campus (GRC, Johnson, Brandt, Rhoads, Honors, West Grace North and South) stated that the location of their residence hall had a “very positive impact” on their level of campus engagement more frequently than residents of other halls. They were also more likely to report using dining facilities and resources like the Academic Learning Commons.

While Cabaniss freshmen on the MCV Campus develop strong ties with one another, they feel disconnected from the rest of the university. MCV Campus residents said the location of their hall had the lowest levels of impact on their campus engagement and were less likely to report using campus amenities, with the exception of dining. Assigning first-year students to halls where they are most likely to use campus resources plays a key role in supporting student success. The university needs more housing appropriate for first-year students to make this possible. MCV Campus housing is better suited to graduate and professional students seeking affordable and convenient housing accommodations that are close to the medical campus.





The desired freshman experience is a centrally-located, traditional or semi-suite residence hall with access to quality community space.

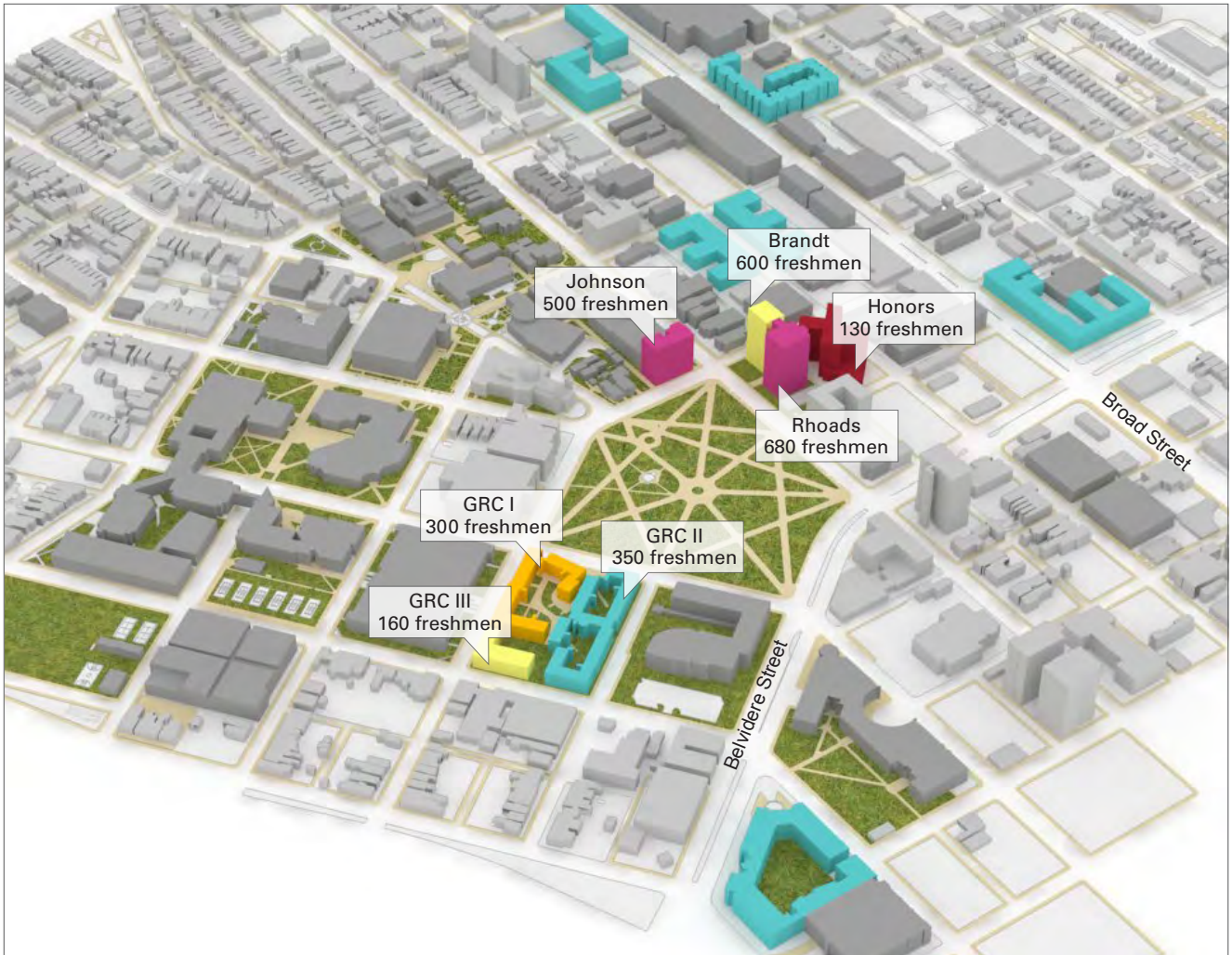


Existing Residence Halls by Unit Type, including Grace and Broad

- Traditional
- Semi-suite
- Suite
- Apartment
- Other unit type

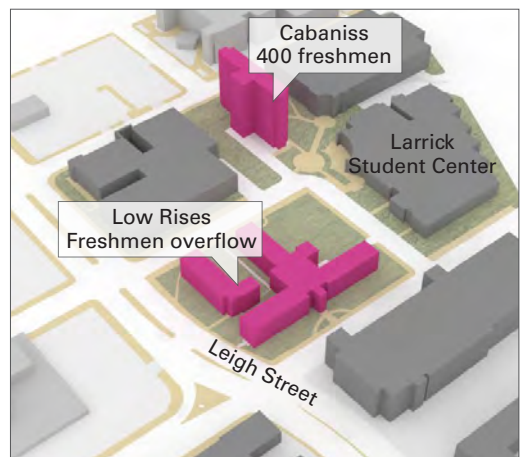
The undersupply of traditional and semi-suite units also results in freshmen living in suites or apartments. Brandt and Gladding Residence Center III house freshmen in suites. In addition, approximately 300 freshmen live in Gladding Residence Center I, which is the only instance where freshmen live in apartments. While many incoming students express a preference for living in the newer units in Brandt Hall, focus group participants commented that the suite configurations encouraged residents to spend time in their units rather than participating in floor activities.

The Housing Master Plan analysis categorizes the Honors College building as an “other” unit category rather than one of the four major unit types. The repurposed hospital building offers single bedrooms that open directly onto the corridor. Each has its own bathroom. Given their past academic success, the students in Honors College are potentially well-suited for the increased independence that this hall offers; however, there is anecdotal evidence that some Honors College residents feel that they do not have the opportunity to meet as many people.



Existing Residence Halls by Unit Type
Monroe Park Campus

- Traditional
- Semi-suite
- Suite
- Apartment
- Other unit type
- Other VCU building
- Non-VCU building



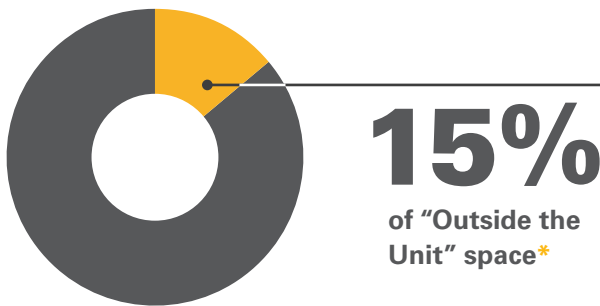
Existing Residence Halls by Unit Type - MCV Campus

COMMUNITY SPACE

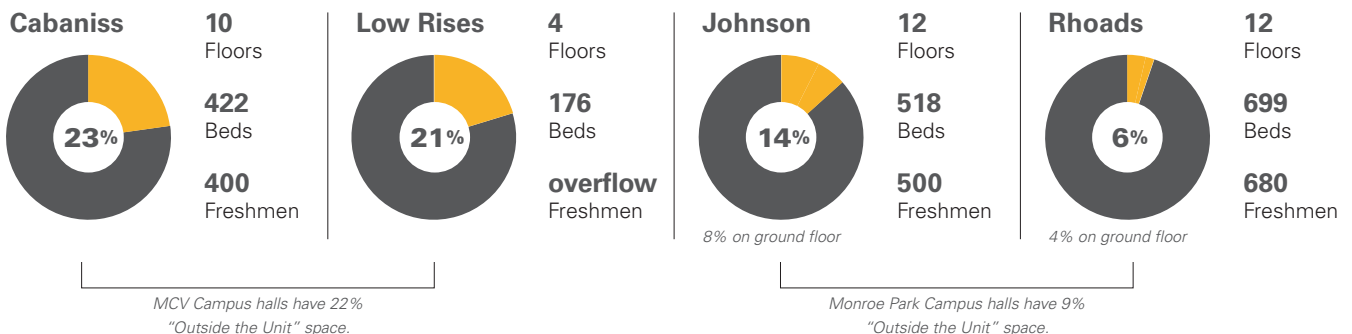
As part of the existing housing assessment, the consultant team classified each room in campus residence halls to calculate the percentage of space devoted to community building. Outside the unit space includes programmed common spaces like floor and building lounges, laundry areas, study spaces, kitchens, classrooms, staff offices, and storage areas. Data was not available for West Grace North and Broad and Belvidere. As a result, those two halls were assumed to have similar percentages to buildings with similar layouts (West Grace South and Ackell Residence Center, respectively).

The percentage of outside the unit space in halls with similar unit types were averaged together to create a metric that could be benchmarked against facilities constructed recently at other higher education institutions. The benchmark averages are gathered from Ayers Saint Gross’ database of residence halls designed across the country. This assessment revealed that the amount of space devoted to community development outside of individual units in VCU’s existing traditional, semi-suite, and suite residence halls falls significantly short of national averages.

“Outside the Unit” Space in Traditional Units at VCU



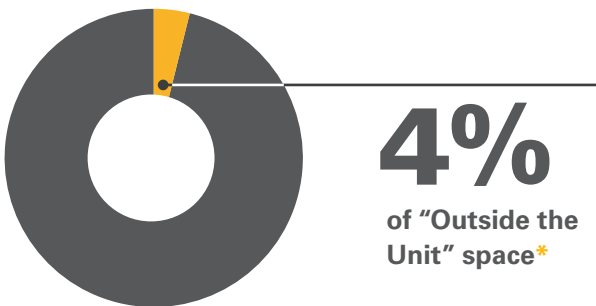
*Ayers Saint Gross has 29% of “Outside the Unit” space in its database of traditional units.



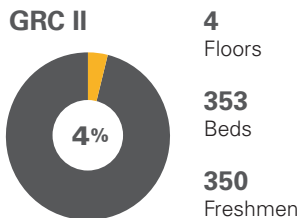
In traditional and semi-suite halls where residents have little social space inside their units, a significant amount of shared space should be devoted to amenities that support community building. Rhoads, Johnson, and GRC II each have a notable lack of outside the unit space. Cabaniss and the Low Rises have floor lounges and other amenities that elevate their percentages closer to the benchmark averages. Their location on the MCV Campus presents other challenges as described in the previous section on Housing Location and Mix.

Differentiating ground-level community spaces from those on upper-level residential floors reveals the lack of social space available to the smaller residential advisor (RA) communities within the halls. In Johnson, Rhoads, and Brandt, the three freshmen towers surrounding Monroe Park, all of the usable common space is located on the ground floor. Each of these buildings houses over 500 students. Ground floor spaces meet some building-wide programming needs,

“Outside the Unit” Space in Semi-suites at VCU



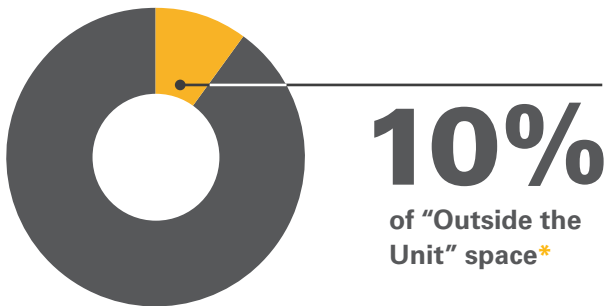
***Ayers Saint Gross has 23% of “Outside the Unit” space in its database of semi-suites.**



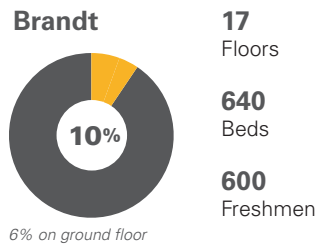
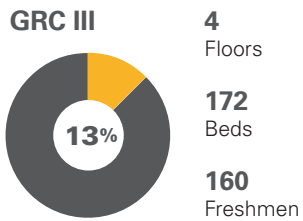
but are insufficient to accommodate programmed events for individual floors as well as informal studying and socializing. Focus group participants described the challenges of holding floor meetings or gathering informally in elevator lobbies because they do not have access to a floor lounge.

In buildings with unit types that promote greater independence, particularly apartments, less common space is needed. On average, VCU's apartment buildings and the Honors College building have more outside the unit space than benchmarks. Several of these halls support living-learning communities and have significant amounts of academic space that increase their percentages.

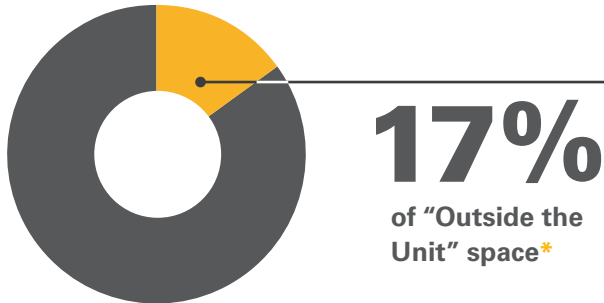
"Outside the Unit" Space in Suites at VCU



***Ayers Saint Gross has 19% of "Outside the Unit" space in its database of suites.**

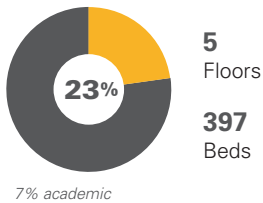


“Outside the Unit” Space in Apartments at VCU

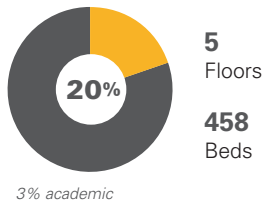


*Ayers Saint Gross has 6% of “Outside the Unit” space in its database of apartments.

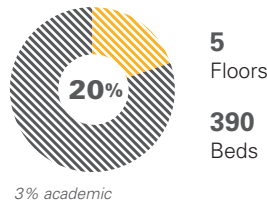
Grace & Broad *(unbuilt)*



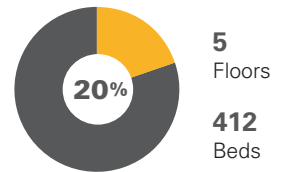
West Grace South



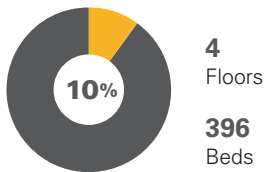
West Grace North**



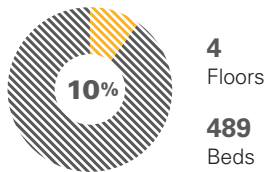
Cary & Belvidere



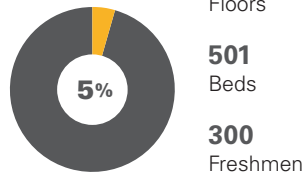
Ackell



Broad & Belvidere**



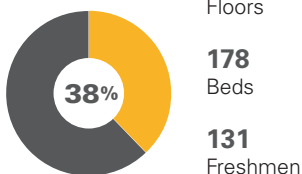
GRC I



** Data unavailable for this hall. West Grace North was assumed to have the same percentage of “Outside the Unit” space as West Grace South, and Broad & Belvidere was assumed to have the same percentage as Ackell.

“Outside the Unit” Space in Other Unit Types at VCU

Honors





Half of VCU's freshmen who live on campus do not have the desired experience during their first year.

Including Honors College, 37% of incoming freshmen live in units that do not provide the desired traditional or semi-suite experience. An additional 13% of freshmen live on the MCV Campus in Cabaniss Hall. Moreover, even those halls that provide the optimal unit configuration for freshmen do not provide adequate community space to fully support RL&H programming and development of informal relationships. This lack of space does not support greater engagement with the university and improved academic performance. Aligning the programmatic structure of VCU's residence halls with its vision for the freshmen experience offers a compelling opportunity to further VCU's strategic objectives to support student success as outlined in the Quest for Distinction.

Facilities Conditions

BCWH Architects completed an assessment of the university's housing facilities to determine their existing condition and potential costs to resolve identified deficiencies over the next 10 years. This assessment was limited in scope to observing a representative sample (10%) of the housing units in selected residence halls. It included Ackell Residence Center, Brandt, Cary and Belvidere, Gladding Residence Center I, II, and II, Honors College, Johnson, and Rhoads. The assessment involved touring and photographically documenting each of these complexes and studying drawings of each building. VCU housing and maintenance staff provided additional information including age and status of roofing, upgrades to mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, and items that need major or ongoing maintenance.

The assessment was completed during the winter of 2014 and reflects current conditions as of that time. The Department of Residential Life and Housing has continued to address deferred maintenance needs with investments totaling approximately \$13 million during fiscal years 2013, 2014, and 2015.

The selected buildings range in age from 5 to 99 years and require a variety of interior and exterior renovations to extend their useful life and help maintain the demand for Virginia Commonwealth University housing.

Separately provided appendices include a Facilities Condition Summary for each building describing observed deficiencies, prioritizing the need of repair, and estimating resulting costs. For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were developed and uniformly applied.

DEFICIENCY TYPE

Identifying and prioritizing deficiencies by type allows the university to clearly plan for its most critical needs.

DEFERRED MAINTENANCE – Maintenance projects that have not been accomplished due to lack of funding. Deferred maintenance projects represent “catch-up” expenses. All are characterized as Priority 1 as a result of their overdue status.

Deficiency Status:

Priority 1: Critical or immediate need (immediate or within 1 year)

CAPITAL RENEWAL – Major upcoming repairs or replacement. The assessment focused on needs in the next 1-5 years.

Deficiency Status:

Priority 1: Critical or immediate need (immediate or within 1 year)

Priority 2: Potentially critical (needed in 2-5 years)

Priority 3: Necessary (not yet critical but needed within 5-10 years)

FUNCTIONALITY – Investments required to adapt facilities to the evolving needs of the institution, modernization, and to changing codes or standards. These expenditures are beyond normal maintenance or capital renewal.

Deficiency Status:

Priority 1: Recommended to meet appropriate standards of student housing

Priority 2: Does not meet current codes/ standards

ASSET CLASS PARENT DESCRIPTION

The assessment describes deficiency type, asset description, deficiency code, deficiency description, affected area, and deficiency status. It also provides an estimate to rectify the deficiency and ranks it by Priority Level in the following Asset Class Parent Descriptions:

- Primary Structures – Columns, roof, floor structure, foundations, exterior walls, and other primary systems
- Secondary Systems – Ceiling and floor finishes, interior and exterior doors, hardware, stairways, windows, interior walls and partitions, and other secondary systems
- Mechanical – Air distribution, controls, heating systems, air handling units, fan coil units, ventilation systems, other HVAC systems, chillers, condensing units, cooling towers, and packaged A/C units
- Electrical – Power distribution, lighting, emergency power, generators, service
- Plumbing – Piping, fixtures, gas system, compressed air
- Restrooms – Partitions, accessories, shower pans, other
- Elevators – Cabs, controls, hoist-way, equipment
- Fire Safety – Fire alarms, fire pumps, lightning protection, extinguishers, sprinklers, other systems
- Accessibility – Doors and hardware, interior paths of travel, site, stairs and railing, signage
- Infrastructure – Sidewalks, plazas, outdoor furniture, outdoor lighting, irrigation, utilities



The Facilities Condition Assessment identifies Gladding Residence Center I and II as candidates for replacement due to their condition.

RENEWAL COST

The cost to repair the identified deficiency was estimated based on unit cost or square foot costs for similar repairs or replacements using typical cost guides in 2014 dollars.

REPLACEMENT COST

The estimated cost to construct (construction costs only) a typical new facility of similar size and unit type. This is a generalized estimate intended only for the purposes of this Housing Master Plan, and is not a true replacement cost evaluation of a specific existing facility.

The chart on the following page shows renewal costs for each building assessed as a percentage of replacement cost. This evaluation highlights RL&H's significant deferred maintenance and capital renewal needs and offers insight into whether or not to renovate or replace a given facility. As a good rule of thumb, once the cost of a facility's needed renovations approaches 70% of the cost of replacement, replacement is often the best long term financial choice. This is due to the fact that a fully renovated building still has older infrastructure that will continue to degrade and have higher operating and maintenance costs than a similar new project.

Using this analytical framework, Gladding Residence Center I and II emerge as candidates for replacement based on their condition. Of the Priority 1 needs identified, 70% are associated with GRC I and II.

VCU HOUSING MASTER PLAN

	Year Constructed	Replacement Cost	Renewal Cost	Renewal as percent of Replacement
Ackell	2001	30,383,280	4,316,593	14%
Brandt	2005	39,199,200	251,800	1%
Cary and Belvidere	2009	46,143,300	720,150	2%
Gladding Residence Center 1	1979	21,412,440	13,612,157	64%
Gladding Residence Center 2	1982	13,659,240	8,507,166	62%
Gladding Residence Center 3	2003	11,218,620	598,555	5%
Honors College	1977	28,510,194	5,839,126	20%
Johnson Hall	1915	24,380,230	6,313,871	26%
Rhoads Hall	1968	30,863,520	9,960,569	32%

Facilities Condition Assessment

MARKET DEMAND ANALYSIS



Objectives

The Housing Master Plan proposes a series of renovation and new construction projects that ultimately provide VCU the appropriate quantity and mix of housing to meet demand. Brailsford & Dunlavey quantified demand utilizing their proprietary demand-based programming (DBP) process. The DBP tool allowed for detailed demand projections by total beds, unit typology, and classification based on statistically significant survey responses from a portion of the university’s student population. The survey asked students to indicate the unit type they would have selected for the current academic year based on detailed descriptions of potential options including sample floor plans and associated rental rates. Students could also indicate that they would have preferred off-campus housing over the proposed unit types and rates. The results of this process established demand for student housing from the university’s target market and were reconciled with Residential Life and Housing’s (RL&H) existing inventory to identify gaps in overall quantity of beds or unit mix.

Methodology

The survey tested the living preferences of VCU students according to eight separate unit configurations. Students could select from a single or double bedroom in the traditional, semi-suite, suite, or apartment unit configurations described in the previous chapter. Survey questions and responses are documented in the appendices, which are provided as a separate document.

While survey respondents included the entire student population at VCU, a series of demographically-based filters identified a target market of potential on-campus residents for the DBP analysis. The target market included current on-campus students and off-campus residents who are single without children, enrolled full-time, and currently renting off campus for more than \$750 per month.

Total Housing Demand by Enrollment Classification

Classification	Projected Demand
Freshman	2,833
Sophomore	1,592
Junior	1,241
Senior	639
Graduate / Professional	451
Total Demand	6,756
2013 Max Capacity	5,804
2015 New Res Halls	397
<i>Total Capacity</i>	<i>6,201</i>
Total Net Demand	555

To further customize the demand analysis to represent VCU’s current and anticipated future conditions, the final housing demand reflects the filter of an Occupancy Coverage Ratio (OCR). OCR is a proprietary Brailsford & Dunlavey tool that reflects the institution’s risk tolerance for providing housing and the competitiveness of the off-campus market in the ultimate demand projections. A higher OCR value assignment indicates a more competitive off-campus market and/or a lower risk tolerance for providing additional housing. A lower OCR value assignment indicates a higher risk tolerance and/or a less competitive off-campus market. For example, a 1.30 OCR indicates that 130 beds of demand for a particular housing type are required to recommend a supply of 100 beds, and a 1.00 OCR indicates that, for that particular unit type, one bed of supply should be provided for each bed of potential demand identified.

In order to respond to VCU’s unique risk tolerance for housing development, a 1.00 OCR was applied for traditional beds, a 1.10 OCR was applied for semi-suite beds, and a 1.25 OCR was applied for full suite beds. A 1.50 OCR was applied to all apartment beds to reflect the competitiveness of the off-campus market, which is comprised primarily of apartments.

The resulting market demand projections were reconciled with findings from the visioning process to determine the amount and type of housing needed, as well as how those needs may change over the 15-year planning period.

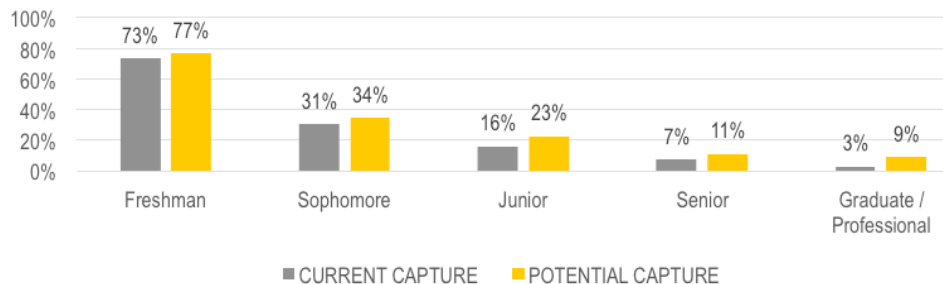
Market Demand

After applying the methodology described above, a total demand of 555 beds exists beyond the university’s current maximum capacity (6,201 beds), which includes the new Grace and Broad residence hall scheduled to open in Fall 2015. Freshmen make up the largest segment of the housing demand, with fewer students projected to live on campus in each successive year.

Based on RL&H’s vision of the Monroe Park Campus as the home for VCU’s undergraduate residential life program, all of the net housing demand identified should be provided there, as opposed to on the MCV Campus, which is envisioned to serve a portion of the university’s identified graduate housing demand (approximately 171 beds). Increasing housing participation by 555 students would result in an overall housing capture rate of 27%, which is 4% higher than the level of current participation by VCU students. While lower-division students (freshmen and sophomores) make up the majority of demand, there is an opportunity to increase housing participation across all enrollment classifications. On a percentage basis, the largest opportunity to increase participation is from upper-division students (juniors and seniors) and graduate students.

Housing Capture Rate Comparison by Enrollment Classification

■ Current Capture
■ Potential Capture



Assignment Policy Overlay

In order to respond to the university’s strategic objectives related to student progression and success, a housing assignment policy overlay is required to ensure that residents’ living environment appropriately supports their developmental needs. This policy is designed to encourage the community development and campus engagement of first-time freshmen by limiting the amount of private space they have within their unit.

To this end, the demand projections assume that VCU would require all freshmen who choose to live on campus to live in traditional or semi-suite units, as opposed to allowing them to choose a full suite or apartment. By limiting freshman housing options to traditional units and semi-suites, RL&H can provide a more uniform residential experience that encourages community interaction and relationship development. While the independence afforded by full suites and apartments can be a positive attribute for more established students, it can be isolating and inhibit a new student’s acclimation to campus environment and culture. Given the elasticity of demand from VCU freshmen shown through survey results, focus groups, and existing decision patterns, this policy overlay will not affect VCU’s overall potential demand; however, it does shift the university’s required mix of unit types by increasing the percentage of traditional and semi-suites needed relative to full suites and apartments.

Demand Summary with Assignment Policy Overlay
(Freshmen only in Traditional Units or Semi-suites)

Class	Traditional	Semi-Suite	Full-Suite	Apartment	Total
Freshman	2,015	818	0	0	2,833
Sophomore	223	155	189	1,025	1,592
Junior	138	138	110	855	1,241
Senior	81	36	64	457	639
Graduate / Professional	122	59	38	232	451
Total	2,579	1,207	401	2,569	6,756
Maximum Capacity + 2015 Halls	1,815	531	812	3,043	6,201
Net Demand	764	676	(411)	(474)	555

Demand Summary

VCU has a net housing demand for communal-style unit types, including traditional units and semi-suites. With the assignment policy overlay, the university has more than satisfied market demand for full suites and apartments with approximately 900 more of these independent-style beds than is required by the market. The Housing Master Plan utilizes a demolition and renovation strategy to align the university's housing capacity with RL&H's vision for supporting students' developmental needs and the current oversupply of independent-style units.

Desired Amenities To Include With On-Campus Housing

In addition to understanding the target market's demand preferences related to unit type, the survey also queried students on the types of amenities they would like to have included as a part of their living experience. Regarding in-unit amenities, a majority of respondents prioritized an in-unit washer/dryer (75%) and a full-sized bed (51%) as important features for an improved residential experience. No other in-unit amenity options garnered selection by more than 50% of the survey respondents. The next most important in-unit amenity to respondents was improved wireless internet connectivity, which was important to approximately 40% of respondents. Regarding community amenities, a majority of students indicated that designated parking for VCU housing residents (52%), access to a kitchen on their floor (51%), and computer labs in their residence hall (51%) were important features in an improved on-campus residential experience.

Location

Location of residence halls creates a unique dynamic between VCU-sponsored housing and the off-campus market. Due to the urban setting of both campuses, several off-campus properties are actually located closer to the core of campus than the residence halls that are owned and operated by VCU. This is particularly true on the Monroe Park Campus. Typically, proximity and convenience are key components of a housing department's marketing message but, at VCU, this is not the case. In fact, 21% of off-campus survey respondents reported a commute time of 5 minutes or less to campus, while only 16% of on-campus residents reported the same travel time. As a result, RL&H must emphasize developmental outcomes and the impact of programming as the core message that differentiates its residential experience from those in the surrounding private market.



Location of surveyed Off-campus Apartment Communities near Monroe Park Campus

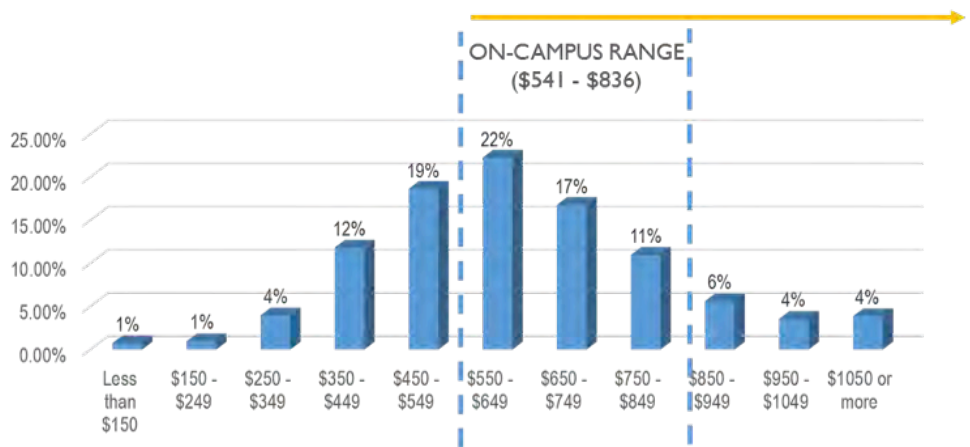
- Off-campus Apartment Communities

Rental Rates

On-campus residents believe that their living arrangement provides many benefits relative to off-campus options. However, focus group feedback and survey responses indicate that students believe that the off-campus market affords them a more cost-effective living option. Survey respondents living off campus were 36% more likely to believe that their residence provided a cost-effective living option than students living on campus. Focus group participants living in newer

residence halls, such as Cary & Belvidere, identified cost as one of the biggest areas for improvement to enhance residential experience at VCU. However, comparing what survey respondents report paying for off-campus housing to VCU housing rates reveals that approximately two-thirds of off-campus renters pay as much or more than what is required to live on campus. Given this information, students' sensitivity to cost indicates a more likely imbalance in the perceived value of living on campus due to the current misalignment between unit type, cost, and quality.

Rental Rate Comparison between VCU Housing and the Off-campus Market (FY 2014)



Percentage of Beds Available in 9- and 12-Month Lease Options

Institution	Lease Structures		
	% 9-Month Lease	% 12-Month Lease	9- or 12-Month Lease Option
University of Alabama-Birmingham	100%	0%	0%
University of Cincinnati	75%	0%	25%
University of Louisville	80%	20%	0%
University of South Carolina - Columbia	98%	2%	0%
University of Virginia	100%	0%	0%
Old Dominion University	80%	20%	0%
University of South Florida - Tampa	91%	0%	9%
University of Illinois - Chicago	99%	0%	1%
Peer Average	90%	5%	4%
Virginia Commonwealth University	67%	33%	0%

Lease Structure

Focus group participants also indicated sensitivity regarding the type of lease options that are available to upper-division students who are interested in living on campus. Currently, the Gladding Residence Center (GRC) complex is the only location where upper-division students can live in a full suite or an apartment with a 9-month lease. As compared to its peer institutions, VCU has the highest percentage of beds (33%) that require a 12-month lease option of the peers researched. The highest percentage offered by any peer institution was 20% by the university of Louisville and Old Dominion University.

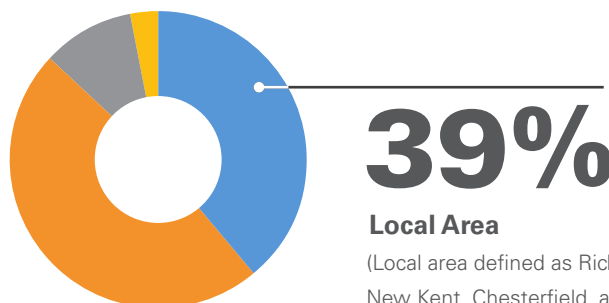
Demographics and VCU’s Housing Needs

The Housing Master Plan’s demand projections are based on VCU’s current enrollment of over 31,000 students (FY 2014 total) and demographic makeup, which includes enrollment status (approximately 80% full-time enrolled) and permanent residence (39% from the local area of Richmond, Hanover, New Kent, Chesterfield, and Henrico). As VCU continues to implement its Quest for Distinction strategic plan and progress as one of the nation’s preeminent urban research institutions, shifting student body demographics may impact housing need. Enrollment changes, both in terms of the overall number of students or the relative composition of students, may require adjustments to the Housing Master Plan strategy.

Typically, as an institution’s profile improves, so too does interest and enrollment from non-local students. From a national perspective, non-local students have a greater pre-disposition to live on campus than local students. Therefore, if the percentage of local students decreases relative to non-local students, the university’s need for housing will increase even if overall enrollment stays the same.

Survey Respondents by Permanent Residence

- Local Area - 39%
- Elsewhere in Virginia - 48%
- Elsewhere in USA - 10%
- Outside USA - 3%



Opportunities to Increase Housing Participation

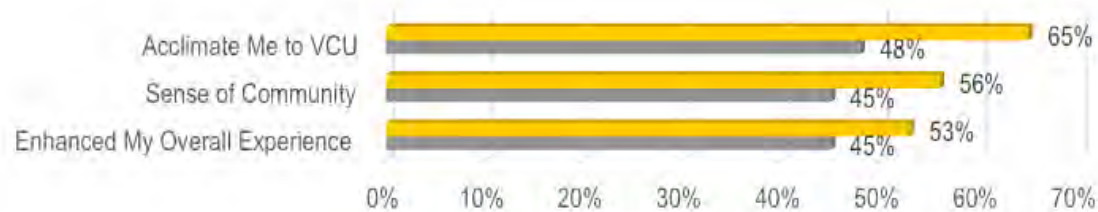
Understanding the importance of the residential life experience at VCU and its potential impact on the university’s strategic objectives related to student success, several targeted analyses were performed to quantify opportunities for RL&H to expand housing participation beyond the identified market demand. The results indicated an opportunity to expand RL&H’s impact through enhanced emphasis on the marketing of living-learning community (LLC) programs. Additionally, accommodating the Greek community through VCU-sponsored housing or instituting a requirement for students of certain classifications to live on campus are viable options to increase student participation going forward.

According to survey results, of the 89% of students who have never participated in a living-learning community, 44% were unaware that VCU offered LLC programming. Of those who have never participated, 21% indicated that they would be interested in joining an LLC. Awareness of VCU’s LLC programs is critical. Students who have participated in an LLC program are more likely to believe that their on-campus residential experience helped acclimate them to life at VCU, provide them with a sense of community, and enhance their overall experience than students that lived in VCU housing that was not associated with an LLC program.

Furthermore, VCU students currently associated with a Greek organization were surveyed to understand their interest in RL&H-sponsored housing facilities. Based

Impact of LLC Participation on Student Development

- Currently Participating
- Not Participating



on survey responses, and controlling for those students already captured by the overall demand projections, approximately 450 additional Greek students would be interested in VCU-sponsored housing.

Finally, an analysis was performed to understand what impact the application of a live-on requirement would have on housing participation. Synthesizing survey responses with demographic information shows RL&H would be able to increase housing participation at VCU by approximately 500 students if they instituted a live-on requirement for all non-local freshmen. Additionally, instituting a sophomore live-on requirement would increase housing participation by over 2,000 students. However, according to survey results, approximately half (46%) of all sophomores believe that a sophomore live-on requirement would decrease their desire to attend the university. Furthermore, RL&H's current limitations in housing capacity make pursuing these significant policy changes infeasible in the short term. Additional capacity would be needed to accommodate the potential additional demand generated through Greek housing or the institution of a live-on requirement.

Freshman Live-on Requirement
Analysis Summary

	Total
Total Full-time Freshman Enrollment	3,694
Total On-Campus Population	2,707
Total Off-Campus Population	987
Non-Local % of Off-Campus Freshman	592
Local % that Currently Rents	93
Potential Capture by Freshman Live-on	685
Less Projected Potential Market Capture	126
Net Impact of Freshman Live-on Requirement	559



RESIDENTIAL LIFE & HOUSING PRIORITIES

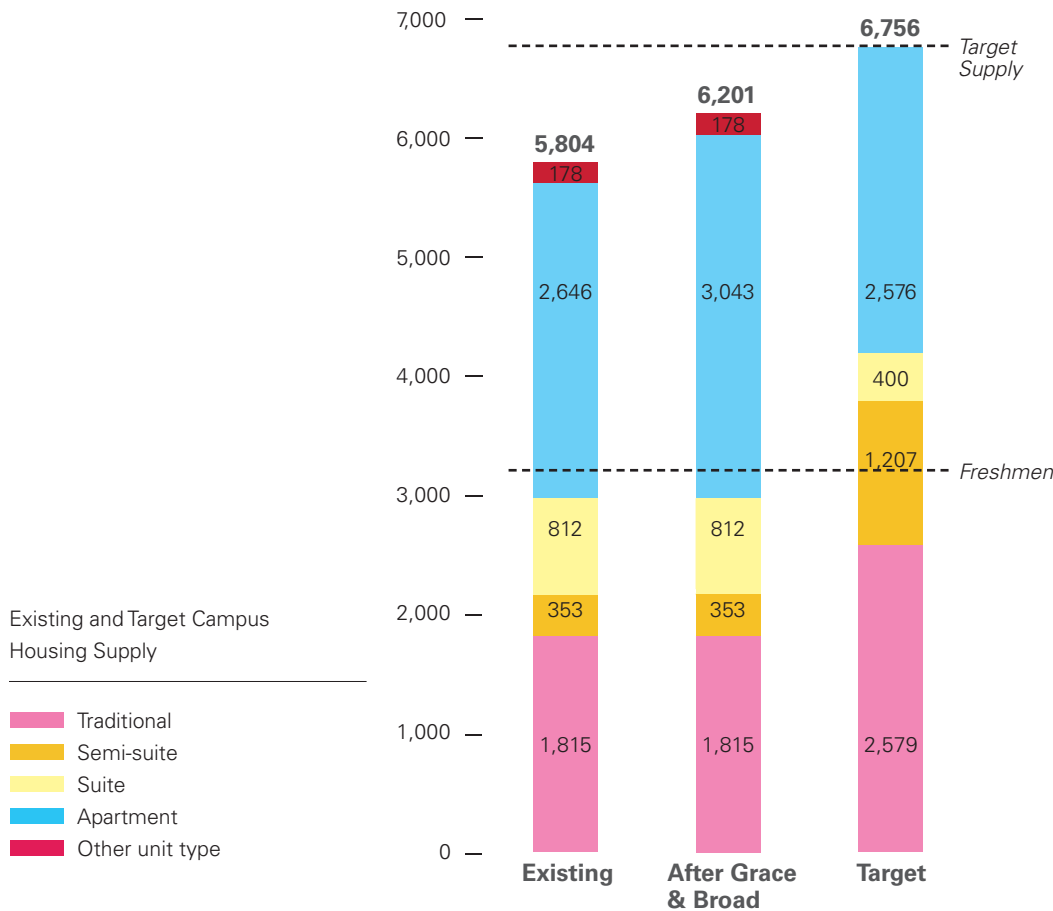


Bedroom in Brandt Hall.

Goals for the Housing Master Plan

The Housing Master Plan process began with an in-depth analysis of existing residence halls and market demand. The assessment showed that VCU students strongly desire to live on the Monroe Park Campus. The market demand analysis shows a need for 6,756 total beds on both campuses, 555 more than the total inventory after completing the new Grace and Broad Residence Center (opening Fall 2015). The demand for new housing is concentrated on the Monroe Park Campus: only 171 of the 6,756 bed demand is related to the MCV Campus, while 598 beds of capacity exist there today.

In addition to articulating the demand for additional VCU-operated housing, the assessment highlighted the need for improvements to existing facilities to ensure the residential experience at VCU, particularly for freshmen, supports the institution’s developmental goals around student success. Several halls have critical deferred maintenance issues that need to be addressed. In many existing halls for lower-division students, both the quantity and quality of community program spaces and amenities are inadequate.



Integrating these findings with the Department of Residential Life and Housing's mission, vision, and values led to the identification of four top priorities:

Replace Gladding Residence Center I and II.

Critical deferred maintenance needs approaching two-thirds of replacement value combined with the potential for significant additional housing capacity on a central campus site support this recommendation.

House all freshmen on the Monroe Park Campus.

Due to a lack of appropriate housing for freshmen, approximately 400 incoming students live in Cabaniss Hall on the MCV Campus each year. While they develop a strong community with one another, their location isolates them from the rest of the VCU community.

House all freshmen in quality traditional or semi-suite style units with common space for each residential advisor community.

Freshman towers, including Brandt, Rhoads, and Johnson, have common spaces on the ground floors only and lack lounges to facilitate community building on each floor. They also require modernization.

Align housing options on both the Monroe Park Campus and the MCV Campus with market demand and university mission.

The market study shows additional demand for housing on the Monroe Park Campus and modest demand for affordable on-campus housing options at the MCV Campus.

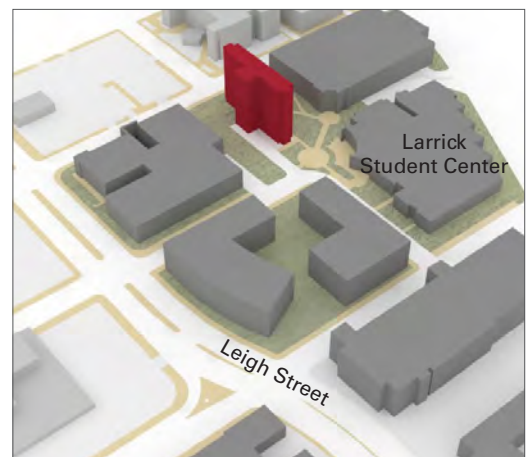
HOUSING MASTER PLAN

VCU HOUSING MASTER PLAN



Proposed Residence Halls by Unit Type
Monroe Park Campus

- Traditional
- Semi-suite
- Suite
- Apartment
- Other unit type
- Other VCU building
- Non-VCU building



Proposed Residence Halls by Unit Type - MCV Campus

Vision

The Housing Master Plan envisions a residential environment where all first-year students who chose to live on campus would live in new or renovated residence halls clustered around Monroe Park, close to the academic core and student life amenities.

Their residence hall communities would consist of traditional or semi-suite units with ample common spaces programmed specifically to provide community-building opportunities. This transformed freshman experience would complement the existing upper-division experience that has been strengthened in recent years with the addition of apartment-style housing options and living-learning communities.

Aligning the Monroe Park Campus housing offerings with the strategic objectives for that campus frees MCV Campus housing to target the needs of the health sciences campus population. The Housing Master Plan envisions reduced overall housing capacity on the MCV Campus to align with the identified market demand. Remaining housing would be renovated and reconfigured to provide an affordable and convenient housing option for graduate and professional students as well as upper-division undergraduate students participating in academic programs housed on the MCV Campus.

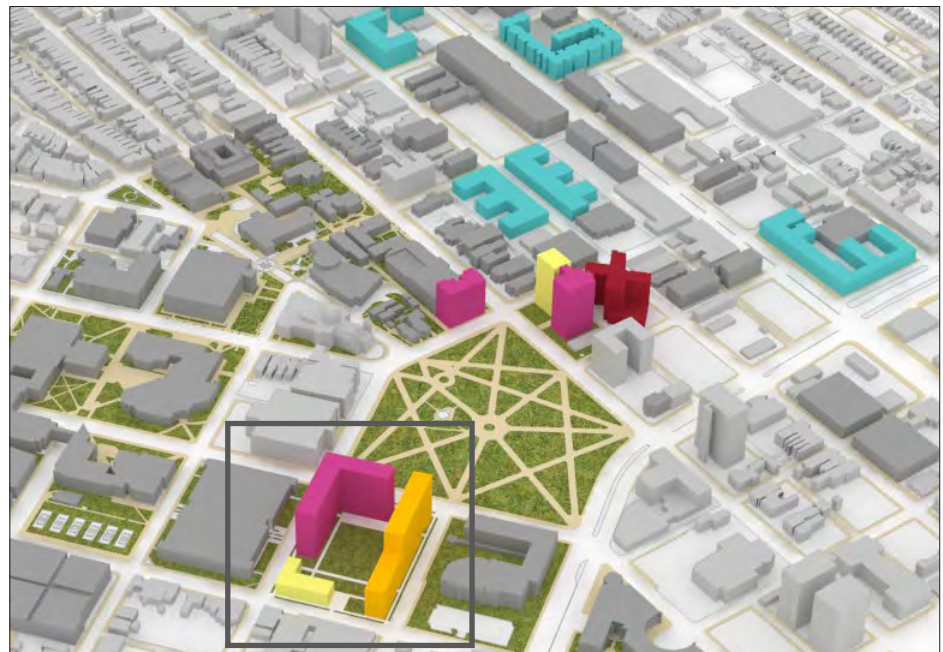
To implement this vision, the Housing Master Plan proposes three overarching efforts that achieve the Department of Residential Life and Housing's (RL&H) four identified priorities in order. Each effort requires several individual projects for implementation. It begins by redeveloping GRC I and II with higher density traditional and semi-suite style halls appropriate for freshmen. This addresses condition issues in those facilities and allows all freshmen to live on the Monroe Park campus at the conclusion of the redevelopment. Next, the freshman towers are renovated with a reconfigured floor layout that includes common space. A new residence hall is constructed on Grace Street to make up for capacity lost as a result of the reconfiguration. Finally, Cabaniss Hall on the MCV Campus is renovated to units that are appropriate for the medical campus' target demographic.

REDEVELOPMENT OF GRC I AND II (PROJECT 1)

Redeveloping GRC I and II is a critical first step in implementing the Housing Master Plan. Using the increased capacity from the new Grace and Broad Residence Center opening in Fall 2015 in combination with strategic leasing and inventory management to create enough flex in the housing system, GRC I and II will be taken offline for redevelopment as soon as possible (Priority #1).

The 857 beds that exist in GRC I and II will be replaced at a higher density to capitalize on the prominent, central site facing Monroe Park. Buildings will range from 8 to 14 stories. Initial programming suggests that the site can accommodate 1,470 beds with a mix of traditional and semi-suite units (840 traditional, 630 semi-suite); however, final bed capacity will be adjusted through the design process. Housing Master Plan analysis suggests that a minimum of 1,400 beds should be constructed on the site to ensure that development projects planned for later in the implementation schedule can provide sufficient capacity to meet the target demand. Additional capacity is desirable if it can be achieved in keeping with the intended character and community sizes on the site as it would provide flexibility for future projects. Upon completion, the university will have sufficient capacity to house all freshmen on the Monroe Park Campus (Priority #2).

Redevelopment of GRC I and II





Project 1. Gladding Residence Center I and II Redevelopment

840 Traditional **630 Semi-suite**
Unit Type

14&8 **447,300**
of Floors Gross Square Feet

Fall 2015
Begin Design


Summer 2016
Begin Construction
(Project Year)

Summer 2018
Completion



Beds Demolished

 **1,470**
New Beds

 **613**
Net New Beds

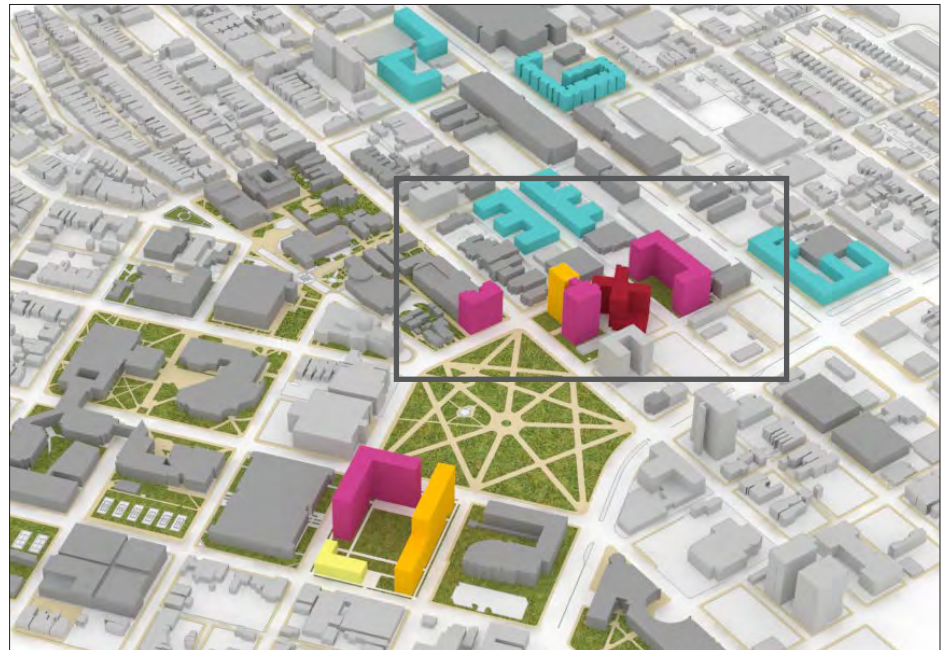
DECOMPRESS FRESHMEN TOWERS AND EXPAND CAPACITY WITH A NEW HALL ON GRACE STREET (PROJECTS 2, 3, 4, AND 5)

Using the increase in capacity from the replacement of GRC I and II, Johnson will be taken offline for one year to create community spaces on each floor and modernize mechanical systems and plumbing.

When Brandt and Rhoads are nearing the end of their existing debt services, a new residence hall be built in the Grace Street corridor. The new hall will provide swing space to renovate Brandt and Rhoads and additional capacity to allow floor plan reconfiguration to include lounges on each floor and improved community bathrooms. They will be taken offline one at a time for one year each to complete these renovations, which will include modernization of mechanical systems and plumbing.

The Rhoads renovation will be similar in scope to the Johnson Hall renovation. In Brandt Hall, however, the scope of renovation will be more significant to convert suite-style units to semi-suites. Existing living areas within the units could become small common areas accessible to the entire floor. At the conclusion of this project, the university will have a large enough inventory of traditional and semi-suite units to house all freshmen in the desired unit type. Additionally, all freshman halls will provide adequate common space (Priority #3).

Freshman Tower Renovations and New Hall on Grace Street



Project 2. Johnson Hall Renovation

Traditional
Unit Type

12 # of Floors
106,001 Gross Square Feet

Fall 2018
Begin Design

Summer 2019
Begin Construction
(Project Year)

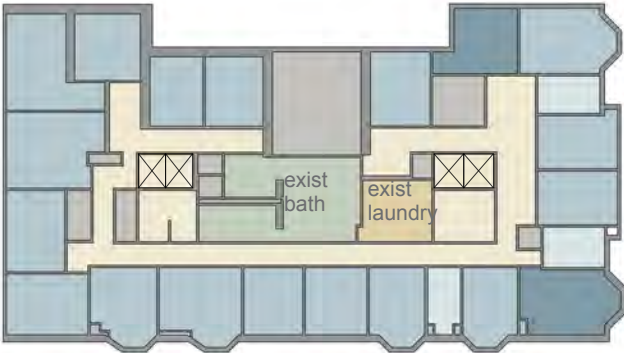
Summer 2020
Completion

 **518**
Existing Beds

 **121**
Beds Lost to Decompression

 **397**
Renovated Beds

Existing Johnson Hall



Potential Decompression of Johnson Hall



Project 3. New Residence Hall on Grace Street

Traditional **Bookholders site**
Unit Type Property Acquisition Required

13 # of Floors
243,000 Gross Square Feet

Fall 2022
Begin Design

Summer 2023
Begin Construction
(Project Year)

Summer 2025
Completion

Facilities & Financial Services, Sally Bells, Bookholders
Buildings Removed

 **800**
New Beds

Project 4. Rhoads Hall Renovation

Traditional
Existing Unit Type

17 **128,598**

of Floors Gross Square Feet

Fall 2024
Begin Design

Summer 2025
Begin Construction
(Project Year)

Summer 2026
Completion

 **699**

Existing Beds

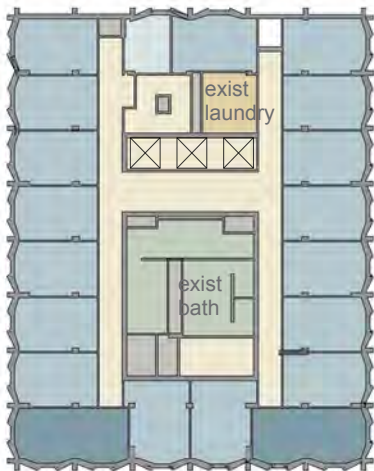
 

Beds Lost to Decompression

 **507**

Renovated Beds

Existing Rhoads Hall



Potential Decompression of Rhoads Hall



park views

-12 beds per floor

192 bed total loss

RA ratio reduced from 40:1 to 28:1

Project 5. Brandt Hall Renovation

Suite Existing Unit Type
Semi-suite Renovated Unit Type

17 # of Floors
163,330 Gross Square Feet

Fall 2025
 Begin Design

Summer 2026
 Begin Construction
 (Project Year)

Summer 2027
 Completion

 **622**
 Existing Beds

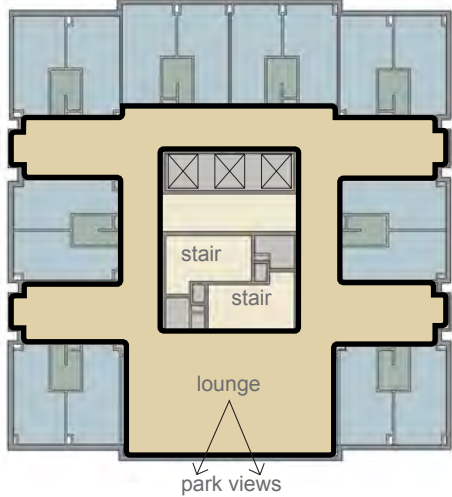
 **110**
 Beds Lost to Decompression

 **512**
 Renovated Beds

Existing Brandt Hall



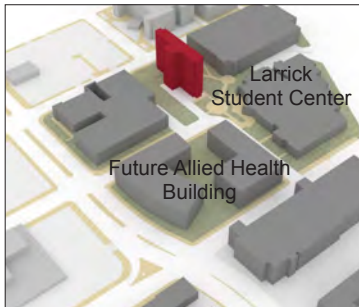
Potential Decompression and Unit Change in Brandt Hall



-8 beds per floor
 128 bed total loss
 RA ratio reduced from 38:1 to 30:1

ADJUST MCV CAMPUS HOUSING PROFILE (PROJECT 6)

The Low Rises currently house graduate and professional students as well as freshman overflow from Cabaniss Hall. After completion of the GRC I and II redevelopment, Cabaniss will no longer be needed for freshman housing. At that time, the current graduate and professional population living in the Low Rises can begin to occupy Cabaniss, and the Low Rises can be vacated to facilitate the Allied Health project.



Proposed Residence Halls by Unit Type - MCV Campus

Cabaniss presents an opportunity to create a housing option targeted specifically for the health sciences profession on the MCV Campus. Survey results showed that those students are seeking an affordable housing option where they can have a private bedroom in a location convenient to their work. Single bedrooms in a traditional unit configuration with shared bathrooms are desirable due to their affordable cost. Cabaniss would be modernized and reconfigured to a unit type appropriate for MCV Campus students. This might include some additional private living space and shared amenities to increase its appeal to the graduate and professional population or upper-division undergraduates participating in health sciences programs (Priority #4). Further study will be needed to determine the optimal unit configurations for this future project.

Project 6. Cabaniss Hall Renovation

Traditional
Existing Unit Type

10
of Floors

To be determined
Renovated Unit Type

80,979
Gross Square Feet

Fall 2026
Begin Design

Summer 2027
Begin Construction
(Project Year)

Summer 2028
Completion

 **335**
Existing Beds

  **184**
Beds Lost to Decompression

 **171**
Renovated Beds

Phasing

The Housing Master Plan's phasing strategy maps a course of action to address Residential Life and Housing's priority issues and implement the vision for residential experience at VCU. It takes into account assumptions about physical availability of sites, typical design and construction duration, and functioning of RL&H's financial system.

The phasing plan must meet certain parameters for feasible implementation. Throughout the planning horizon, it must maintain a steady housing capacity for the university, avoiding significant increases or decreases from year to year that would pose management challenges. It assumes typical design and construction time frames of 9 months for design, 15 months for renovations (one academic year and two summers), and 24 months for new construction. Lastly, the changes proposed to the university's housing inventory must maintain the solvency of the housing system. This is assessed by debt-coverage ratio (DCR), which measures net revenue available to offset the cost of a system's debt obligations. It is calculated by dividing total net operating income (total revenues minus total operating expenses) by total debt service for a given period. A DCR of 1.20 or more indicates a healthy financial situation and a DCR less than 1.00 signifies that revenues are not currently sufficient to cover the cost of operating expenses and debt obligations. Currently, RL&H is in a favorable financial position with regard to this metric. To confirm ongoing financial performance, Brailsford & Dunlavey developed a system-wide financial model to understand the performance of each individual building and the system as a whole. The baseline condition reflects actual revenues, operating expenses, and debt service information provided by RL&H and allocated to each hall on a square-foot basis where appropriate. The model illustrates how various potential facility improvements, university policies, enrollment changes, delivery methods, and master plan phasing strategies would impact RL&H's current and future financial position. The assumptions underlying the financial model are explained in the appendix document.

Financial Performance by
Residence Hall – Debt Coverage
Ratio for FY 2014

Rhoads **2.67**
Brandt **2.21**
Ackell **1.76**
Honors **1.15**
Cary & Belvidere **0.97**
West Grace South **0.85**
GRC III **0.85**
West Grace North **0.82**
Low Rises **0.50**

VCU would benefit from expedited implementation to more quickly address the identified strategic priorities should one or more of the key financial assumptions change, particularly related to funding availability.

The Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee worked with the consultant team to explore the impacts of numerous potential implementation scenarios before settling on a preferred plan that is mapped out over a 15-year timeframe. Based on construction schedules and availability of real estate, the plan could be implemented more quickly; however, some projects must be delayed to maintain

VCU HOUSING MASTER PLAN

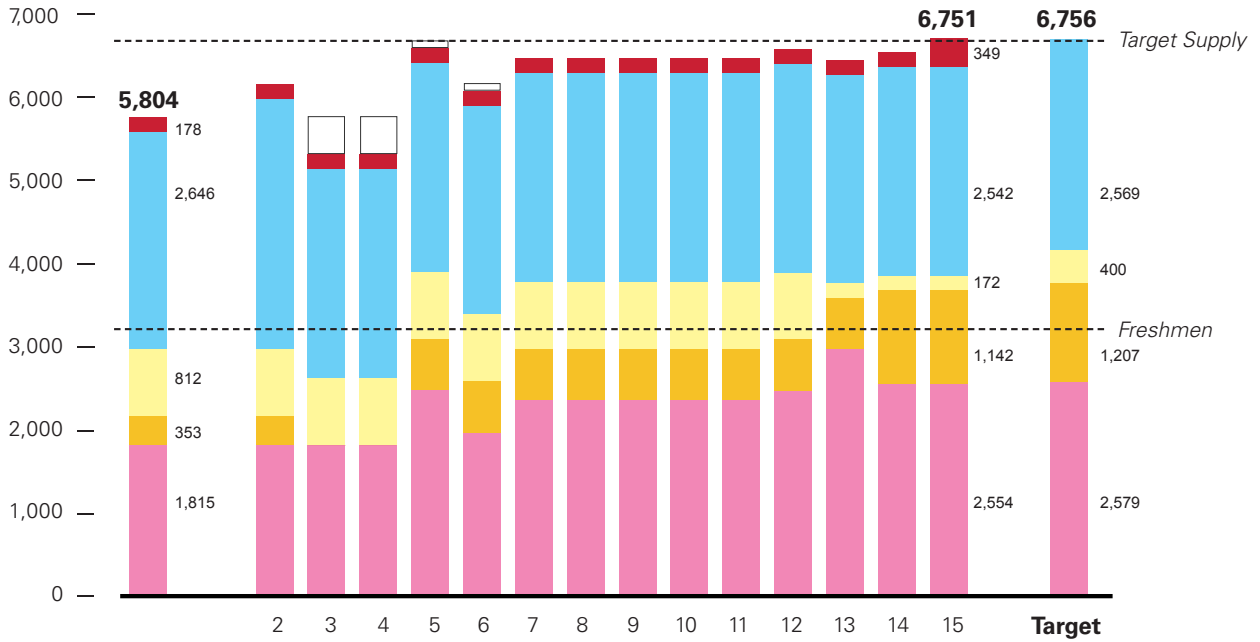
		2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028		
		Exist.	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Grace + Broad			397													
Leasing				350												
Doubling				107												
GRC I		501			-501	840										
GRC II		353			-353	630										
Johnson		518					-518	397								
Grace St East													810			
Rhoads		699											-699	507		
Brandt		640												-640	512	
Honors College		178														
GRC III		172														
W. Grace South		458														
W. Grace North		390														
Cary + Belvidere		412														
Ackell		396														
Broad + Belvidere		489														
MCV	Low Rises	176														
	Cabaniss	422													-422	171
TOTAL		5,804	6,201	5,804	5,804	6,748	6,230	6,520	6,520	6,520	6,520	6,520	6,631	6,498	6,588	6,759
CHANGE		-	397	0	0	944	426	716	716	716	716	716	827	694	784	955

Phasing Plan

- Traditional
- Semi-suite
- Suite
- Apartment
- Other unit type
- Leasing and Doubling
- Design (9 month typical)
- Renovation (15 month typical)
- New Construction (24 month typical)

financial feasibility. From a physical feasibility and inventory management standpoint, the new hall at Grace Street East and the Rhoads and Brandt renovations could begin immediately following the Johnson renovation. However, to maintain the ability to fully cover expenses and debt obligations system-wide during the renovations, RL&H must wait until the existing debt service on Rhoads and Brandt is retired. The university does not need the additional capacity provided by the new Grace Street East hall until those renovations are set to begin. As a result, the new hall is delayed until the Brandt and Rhoads debt service is nearly ready to be fully retired.

VCU would benefit from expedited implementation to more quickly address the identified strategic priorities should one or more of the key financial assumptions change, particularly related to funding availability. As a result, the university should continually reassess timing to ensure that they capitalize on any potential opportunities to accelerate implementation in a financially feasible manner.



Unit Mix Over Time

- Traditional
- Semi-suite
- Suite
- Apartment
- Other unit type
- Leasing and Doubling

The phasing plan provides flexibility to quickly adjust to changing conditions and assumptions including land availability, access to funding, politics, and enrollment growth, while still decisively and effectively addressing the identified strategic priorities. With only a few exceptions, the projects are independent from each other, meaning that the timing of one is not necessarily contingent on the completion of or impacted by delays to another. This flexibility allows RL&H to capitalize on unanticipated opportunities as they arise without requiring significant changes to the established implementation plan. The Honors College site, for example, could accommodate additional capacity beyond what the Housing Master Plan proposes. The university can adjust to any future changes in demand including enrollment shifts or changes to the identified target market by building more or less capacity on this site without impacting any other components of the plan.



CONCLUSION



Realizing this vision requires bold actions. The plan maps out an implementation strategy with a specific sequence of individual projects that implement the vision over the course of 15 years.

Where We Are

VCU's strategic plan, Quest for Distinction, emphasizes the importance of student success to the university's initiatives over the next several years. The residential experience plays a central role in achieving this objective because of the significant impact housing can have in this area. In many ways, the residential experience at VCU already positively impacts students' lives. However, the assessment of existing facilities completed as part of the Housing Master Plan highlighted that in terms of unit type, location, condition, and access to community space, VCU's housing stock does not align with these strategic objectives. The Housing Master Plan Strategic Committee prioritized the first and second year experience as a critical time to support student success and the area where the housing stock has the most pressing issues. Some first-year students live on the MCV Campus while taking all their courses on the Monroe Park Campus. Others do not have the chance to live in traditional or semi-suite units, which have been shown to promote relational and community connections. In many instances, their residence halls do not have floor lounges or other common spaces and need significant investments to modernize their condition.

Where We're Going

The Housing Master Plan sets out a strategy to align VCU's housing with its strategic objectives through a combination of demolition, new construction, and renovation. All first-year students who chose to live on campus would live close to the academic core in quality traditional or semi-suite style units with adequate community space. Expanding the Monroe Park Campus housing capacity frees MCV Campus housing to target the needs of the health sciences campus population.

GRC I and II will be redeveloped as a lower-division community with additional capacity, addressing condition issues in those facilities and allowing all freshmen to live on the Monroe Park campus at the conclusion of the redevelopment. Johnson, Brandt, and Rhoads will be renovated and reconfigured to include common space. A new residence hall on Grace Street will make up for capacity lost as a result of these reconfigurations. Finally, Cabaniss Hall on the MCV Campus will be renovated to target the medical campus' demographic.

The strategy considers availability of real estate, timeline of construction, and financial health of the Department of Residential Life and Housing (RL&H) for a plan that is reality-based and implementable based on today's conditions. The plan is also flexible to respond to changing conditions, particularly around funding availability, to achieve RL&H's priorities more quickly if possible.

Acknowledgements

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