

Clemson trustees sign off on major campus projects

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CLEMSON — The Clemson University Board of Trustees approved a new \$56 million alumni center and \$11.5 million renovation for Tillman Hall's auditorium at its meeting last week.

Plans for the alum-

ni center first gained traction in July when the project's first phase was approved by the board's Finance and Facilities Committee. The committee gave support for phase two plans on Jan. 28.

The university needs state approval for

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phase two and could begin construction in November, with plans to finish in March 2024.

The alumni center, designed to be built near the Madren Center and Walker Course on campus, will provide space for various university-related organizational groups.

That includes the Clemson University Foundation (CUF), the Alumni Association, the admissions office, development office, the board of trustees' staff offices, the Michelin Career Center and visitors center. "This project will allow us to co-locate a bunch of our offices that currently are dispersed all over campus, but will really benefit from an efficiency perspective to be co-located," executive vice president of finance and operations Tony Wagner said. "(It's) a project that really incorporates all of these functions that take student through their earliest visits to Clemson through becoming an alum and a donor later in their Clemson experience." The project's total cost

estimate previously sat at \$45.8 million, but with rising costs of materials, it has increased nearly \$10 million.

It's now expected to be funded by \$12 million in gifts and \$44 million in state institution bonds — with \$2.6 million worth of those funded through the lease that CUF will pay for its space.

"We still very much believe that this project — even with the increased budget — is a great investment for Clemson," Wagner said last month.

He added the project would free up 50,000 square feet of space in core campus.

ALUMNI CENTER PLANS

The alumni center will stretch over 101,404 gross square feet and be located near the 18th green of the golf course, just north of the Madren Center, according to officials.

"It'll create a multi-use building that would have event space and flexible office space for student, alumni- and donor-facing activities," Wagner said in July. "It'll be designed to fully utilize a great



FILE

Renderings provided by Clemson University show the early design plans for a \$56 million alumni center to be built near the Madren Center and Walker

building location around the 18th green of the golf course. This will be a high-profile project and important to our future fundraising efforts."

Construction of a new pro shop, grill and outdoor patio space near the golf course is also included in the project's plans. Nearly 2,000 square feet will be dedicated to the board of trustees, while 11,988 square feet will be dedicated to the Michelin Career Center.

TILLMAN HALL

Trustees also approved renovations to Tillman Hall's approximately 13,165-square-foot auditorium funded by maintenance and stewardship reserves.

The project will be up for state approval in April, and the board is expected to sign off on the second phase in October.

Construction would start in July 2023, with estimated completion a year later, according to Wagner.

"This is a great project right in the heart of campus, a historically significant building," he said at a committee meeting. "Tillman Hall is 95,000 — almost 96,000 — square feet. This involves a little bit over 13,000 square feet. It's going to create a modern auditorium, but with respect to the historic significance of the building."

The building hasn't been refurbished in 40 years.

"It's going to provide us with a premier gathering space in the heart of campus," Wagner said. "It's going to give us our largest student auditorium and classroom, right in the heart of campus — about 700 seats. This building has not been renovated since 1981, and so when we're renovating this part of the building, we'll also be doing some restroom and some systems improvements as part of the project."

He added the renovation includes knocking out a

stage that is no longer used.

"That building has a very large stage that we do not need anymore," Wagner said. "That stage used to be used for theatrical productions that we do not have in that building anymore, so part of this project is getting rid of that big stage and making this building much more (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible as we move forward. That's the general concept that we're working with."