Pedestrian Access Analysis

The pedestrian network, like the open space system, is well developed around the original campus core but less developed in peripheral areas of campus such as around the Morrison Center and the Stadium. Where parking lots predominate, open space is conspicuously absent and the community paths are broken. In many areas, the width of paths or sidewalks is inadequate for both current and projected pedestrian volumes, and for the emergency and maintenance vehicles that must share them.

At the campus periphery, street crossings are too infrequent. On the west, Capitol Boulevard is a major barrier to increasing numbers of pedestrians with destinations on both sides of the street. The existing underpass at the Capitol Boulevard bridge is significantly out-of-direction for many users crossing near Island Street. The crossing width and the time it takes to cross at Capitol Boulevard and University Drive together with the complexity of through and turning movements, makes crossing this intersection a hostile and dangerous experience for anyone on foot. University Drive is narrower and less complex at Broadway Avenue than at Capitol Boulevard. Pedestrian circulation is manageable at the current level but will deteriorate if the street is widened and as more students find it necessary to reach destinations south of University Drive.
Vehicular & Bicycle Analysis

The Boise State University campus is well served by arterials and collectors from the east, south and west. Access from the north is limited by the Boise River Greenbelt and Julia Davis Park. University Drive provides good collector and distributor service for the campus but at the expense of the pedestrian environment. Curbside parking along University Drive is a good traffic calming device and enhances pedestrian safety by creating a buffer between traffic and those on foot. However, the street is wide enough to constitute a serious impediment to campus circulation on foot. This will become a greater concern as more development occurs on the southeast campus.

Access drives through campus conflict with pedestrian circulation yet often serve relatively few parking spaces or duplicate other access. Off campus event parking with shuttle service is an excellent parking and traffic demand management solution, which may be the most cost-effective solution to increasing demand.

Current transportation improvements in the general area under consideration are:

- An extension of Overland to Broadway, possibly aligned to follow the Protest Road descent from the bench.

- A previously proposed interchange on Capitol Boulevard with University Drive and Boise Avenue would separate southeast-bound traffic by way of an underpass below Capitol Boulevard. Pedestrian and urban design issues with this proposal are unresolved.

Bicyclist and pedestrian conflicts occur in many places on the campus. A partial resolution would be to designate primary bicycle routes on campus where they can operate at speed and avoid conflicts with major pedestrian circulation. Discussion of dismount zones in the central campus are ongoing. Circulation design should focus on minimizing places of potential conflict. COMPASS (Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho) considers all arterials and collectors for inclusion of bike lanes. The Greenbelt is also targeted for bicycle use, and much of it has been so designated.
Parking Analysis

The original campus was not planned with extensive parking resources in mind. As parking needs grew, expedient solutions were found, with the result that parking has now become a dominant feature of the campus. The physical size of the campus is at the threshold where users are tempted to drive rather than walk between classes. Ideally, parking facilities should be convenient yet inconspicuous, and not a primary user of space.

The spatial organization of the campus and the convenience and amenity of circulation within it have been seriously compromised by the unconstrained growth of parking lots, particularly at the west end of the campus. Also, the large surface lots waste valuable close-in development sites. Some reserved parking spaces, in particular, create excessive access drives to serve relatively few spaces. If the Boise campus is to have a pedestrian-friendly core, the bulk of parking will need to be consolidated on the campus periphery.

On average, parking spaces at the university are being used three to four times a day which indicates an efficient management. Boise State University regularly reviews and updates its parking policies and plans including permits, fees, fines, enforcement, and facilities.

Campus parking resources have not been easy to find as a first time visitor. An improved graphic identification and directional signage system has been implemented.

Special events parking is very logically addressed by arrangements for additional off-campus, evening or weekend use of nearby major facilities such as the Washington Group International Headquarters. Patrons can then use Boise State University shuttles to the stadium, Taco Bell Arena or performing arts centers on campus.
CAMPUS FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Landscape Analysis

The landscape at Boise State University is primarily ornamental with a narrow band of native riparian vegetation along the Boise River. Around older areas of campus such as the central quadrangle, there are mature trees and limited shrub plantings. The predominant ground cover is turf. Virtually all landscaped areas at the campus are irrigated with underground sprinkler systems. With Boise’s hot summers, outdoor areas shaded by large trees are coveted. What is lacking is an overall framework of plantings that reinforces distinct open spaces. Shrub plantings in most areas are against building foundations. In many areas trees are located as individual objects rather than masses that give shape to outdoor spaces or give direction to circulation corridors. The primary goal of the campus landscape should be to reinforce the open space and path system. Evergreens have a place in the campus environment although their effect on solar access to buildings and outdoor spaces must be carefully considered. All decisions on ornamental landscape improvements should take into account water use and maintenance demand.

Riparian vegetation is lush and creates an attractive backdrop to campus buildings. Unfortunately, this landscape is narrowly confined to the bank between Campus Lane and the water’s edge. It is also monotonous without significant breaks to allow views to the water. It may be possible to thin some of the river edge vegetation at selected locations while extending new riparian vegetation to other adjacent areas on the inland side of Campus Lane resulting in no net loss of habitat. Any concepts for modification to riparian vegetation must be approved by all governing agencies with jurisdiction.

Ornamental plantings enhance areas near building entrances.

The campus has many beautiful mature trees but lacks consistent patterns of tree plantings.

Plantings block views from the central quadrangle to the Boise River Greenbelt.
The network of existing wet utilities on the Boise State University campus is the result of 65 years of planning and development. Existing major corridors for wet utilities are well developed along streets, access drives and primary paths, demarcating no-build zones for future development. Some of the systems have been recently upgraded and their condition is good while others are at the end of their life cycle or are under capacity. Expansion of these systems requires a system by system evaluation at the time of new campus development based on projected needs. Conversely, by identifying the geographic location of future growth, the long range master plan can minimize redundant demolition and construction by locating conduits and tunnels in predictable corridors and accommodating some factor of excess capacity for future buildings.

Planning of the campus between University Drive and Beacon Street is largely predicated by the alignments of utilities under existing streets. These will be the alignments of narrower paths and driveways.

Boise State University should coordinate its long range master plan with long range plans by Intermountain Gas Company, United Water Company and the City of Boise (sewers). Savings in capital development cost can be realized if new development at Boise State University can be coordinated with concurrently planned utility extensions or upgrades.

Existing corridors for power, telephone and data conduit are well developed along streets, access drives and primary paths, demarcating no-build zones for future development.

The university has contracted with Idaho Power to have two separate electrical distribution feeders installed to the campus. There is a capacity for 20 megawatts of power to be delivered to the campus. In addition, the university’s own, two-loop distribution system will likely need to be reconfigured as planned expansion near the College of Applied Technology and the west quad occurs.

Boise State University is in the process of developing a new Information Technology backbone for the campus. Construction of the first portions will begin in the summer of 2006.

The campus lighting system is well developed in some areas and less developed in others. With evening activities increasing and the concept of a pedestrian campus emerging, consistent path and open space lighting is critical to safety. Boise State University has adopted metal halide as a standard luminaire type. Standard pedestrian fixtures have been adopted and used on campus development projects. Obsolete fixtures should be replaced with fixtures meeting the new standards.
The 1997 Campus Framework Master Plan was the first comprehensive evaluation of the Boise State University campus to be undertaken for many years. It was prompted by a new Strategic Plan for the University, and by a decision to establish a new Boise State University campus in Canyon County on a large, open site east of Nampa. A master plan for the new campus was prepared in parallel with the main campus plan, and provisions were made for expansion to include a full range of undergraduate degrees there in time, as well as the applied technology programs already established in Canyon County.

Four major initiatives at the center of the 1997 Strategic Plan were:

• Manage growth while preserving and enhancing access;
• Enhance academic quality and reputation;
• Improve management and administrative functions;
• Develop the University’s human relations.

The consultants undertook a lengthy series of meetings, in which every constituency in the University was represented. These sought how the four initiatives might be implemented, and served to identify current inadequacies in space, equipment and campus facilities. They also contributed to formulation of four sets of goals for the master plan:

Goal A: Promote Boise State University as an Urban University;
Goal B: Reinforce a Pedestrian Campus Environment for Boise State University;
Goal C: Integrate the Boise River Greenbelt with Boise State University;

Those goals remain relevant today, as the campus is readied for its role as a metropolitan research university of distinction. The goals are retained in the updated master plan, with some amendments to the objectives derived from each.

For all of the above reasons, the focus of the 1997 master plan was on understanding what already existed on campus, and how optimal use could be made of those facilities. The campus was of finite size and land-locked. Enrollment was expected to continue to climb, but development of the Canyon County campus would relieve the main campus of undue pressure. Much of the 1997 master plan document was concerned with exploring the functional framework of the campus. Recommendations included clarification of use zones and consolidation of academic departments, making circulation safer and more direct, consolidation of scattered parking lots into strategically located parking garages, and strengthening the identity of the campus by clearer definition of the quadrangles and other open spaces that define the environment for each set of uses.
CAMPUS FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Existing Campus

Many proposed improvements have been made, many others remain relevant. However, a number of important changes have occurred that make the 2005 master plan distinctly different from its immediate predecessor. Identification of Boise State University as a metropolitan research university of distinction has three immediate and important consequences: a strong focus on research, and therefore on facilities that can attract distinguished researchers; the shift away from applied technology programs on campus, relocating them to the places where they have direct application; and a growing trend toward interdisciplinary research where new facilities may be shared by several programs or departments. A number of new facilities have been completed or committed, including the multipurpose classroom building, parking garages and housing built on west campus; expansion of the Stadium, construction of the tennis center, new housing and creation of a new indoor practice facility on east campus; and expansion of campus ownership south to Beacon Street and east to Denver Avenue.

New Construction or Renovation since 1997

1. Boise River Greenbelt/Campus Lane Safety Improvements
2. Parking Structure #1
3. Multipurpose Classroom Facility
4. Capitol Village Retail Center
5. University Square Apartments
6. Memorial Plaza
7. a. David S. Taylor Hall
   b. Driscoll Hall
   c. Morrison Hall
   d. John H. Keiser Hall
8. Appleton Tennis Center
9. Bronco Stadium Additions
10. Student Recreation Center
11. Micron Engineering Center
12. H. W. Morrison Civil Engineering Building
13. Extended Studies Center
14. Children’s Center Addition