campus framework analysis
Campus Form Analysis

With enabling legislation in 1939, Boise Junior College moved from a downtown block to the former municipal airport. This site was close to downtown yet comparatively open and large (more than 100 acres). Prominent businesses and civic leaders utilized a general obligation bond approved by the taxpayers and a grant from the federal Works Progress Administration to build the first significant campus building. Called the Administrative Building (Administration Building today), it housed all classrooms, the library, laboratories, offices and a fairly large room for the student union. This building, in collegiate gothic style, was located at the end of a formal entry drive facing the Boise River, Campus Lane. This formal organization would influence the form of the campus and arrangement of buildings over the next three decades. In the early years an airplane hanger surviving from the airport was used for the gymnasium.

The Science Building and Assembly Building, added over the next few years began to define the first quad. Driscoll and Morrison residence halls were also constructed, although separate from the academic core. A gymnasium and wooden football stadium were constructed in the east sector of campus, near Broadway. The large field west of the Science Building remained undeveloped. By the early 1960s, the Liberal Arts Building and Library were built, extending the formality of the original quad. As with many of the earlier facilities, these buildings were constructed with local assistance, either public or private. A formal fountain and pool were constructed with the Library as a gathering place on the east edge of the quad. Several pathways were added to provide circulation between buildings.

By the mid-1960s, the institution had gained four-year status and enrollment continued to grow. The Business Building was developed along with a major addition to the Library, now enclosing the original quad, all but eclipsing views of the river, park and foothills. A formal walk system was now fully developed in the original quad, but remained incomplete in the peripheral areas of campus. The new Student Union Building was added in the late 1960s at the corner of University Drive and Lincoln Avenue, well separated from the academic core and independent from it in its orientation. At this time, the original entry drive from Campus Lane was eliminated although it was still actively used for vehicular access and parking. This is the point in the evolution of the campus at which surface parking lots began to become a noticeable feature of the campus environment. Not only were the lots south of the Administration Building and next to the Library and Liberal Arts Building becoming significant, but also a very large lot at the east end of campus, built for the new concrete football stadium, became a dominant feature.

Jefferson's University of Virginia plan was a milestone of American campus design.

American campuses embraced Beaux Arts principles of formal open space axes in the late 19th century.

Boise Junior College was founded in 1932 at St. Margaret's Hall at First and Idaho Streets.

The Science Building was added in an "L" shape, suggesting the edges of a future quadrangle.

The primary feature of Boise Junior College's initial development at its current site was a formal axis to the river.
By the 1970s, the east sector of campus was beginning to be developed with additional buildings for vocational training instruction. These filled the space ringed by Bronco Lane and hid the original, formal axis of the Gymnasium from University Drive. The arrangement of buildings respected the original geometry, which was, however, totally unrelated to that of the central campus.

As enrollment, classes and degrees continued to expand in the 1970s and 1980s, so did campus facilities. The Education-Science/Nursing Building and Morrison Center for the Performing Arts were added. Both of these were sited and oriented independent of the geometry of the original campus core, related to it only by proximity. By now the Boise River Greenbelt was a civic amenity of great local pride, and this seemed to influence the siting and orientation of these two new substantial buildings. Another factor was that the Morrison Center was to be a city cultural facility shared with the university, so it had an intentional orientation toward the river and downtown Boise. The effect of this was a row of buildings that sat independent from one another and the rest of the campus, not organized by shared open space. As the demand for these buildings has grown, the remaining open space to the south has been usurped entirely by surface parking.

By the late 1980s, and early 1990s Boise State University took its first steps in growing beyond the original airport grounds enclosed by Capitol Boulevard, University Drive, Campus Lane and Broadway Avenue. The Health Sciences-Riverside and Raptor Research Center were developed in former ITT buildings west of Capitol Boulevard, along Royal Boulevard. The College of Applied Technology Building was constructed on the south side of University Drive, facing the College of Applied Technology center. The original residential blocks between University Drive and Beacon Street have been purchased incrementally by Boise State University on an as-available basis and are used for student housing, temporary office space or surface parking. Now that university ownership has been consolidated between Lincoln Avenue and Denver Avenue, the land can be planned as a part of the campus.

The district west of Capitol Boulevard is in a state of transition from light industrial to institutional and support residential uses. In fact, it has positive qualities for central city residential use: proximity to downtown employment, Boise State University, Julia Davis Park and is well served by vehicular, transit, bicycle and pedestrian circulation. This growing residential use is compatible with satellite campus uses. Development is limited on parts of the area which lie within the 100-year flood zone.

With completion of the first parking garage and construction of more on-campus housing, Boise State University has begun to reverse the outward spread of the campus. Consolidation of property ownership between University Drive and Beacon Street, together with relocation of professional technical training programs off campus has created opportunities for growth and consolidation of facilities within an organized campus. Establishment of long-term campus boundaries at Beacon Street and Denver Avenue will be reassuring to the neighbors who have been troubled by past acquisitions.
CAMPUS FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Adjacent Uses Analysis

The Boise State University campus occupies a special place in the greater central city area of Boise. It is arguably within walking distance of the central business district but is separated by Julia Davis Park and has developed its own institutional character that is quite distinct from the rest of downtown.

University Neighborhood, which abuts Boise State University on the south, has a beneficial relationship with the university: the university provides many of the amenities that make this neighborhood a good place to live, as well as providing demand for housing and other neighborhood services. The blocks between Lincoln Avenue, Denver Avenue, University Drive and Beacon Street have been a source of friction between Boise State University and its neighbors. Uncertainty for both residents and the university have been superseded by a long range vision for this area as a carefully planned expansion of the campus.

The Health Sciences-Riverside expansion of Boise State University across Capitol Boulevard had the effect of spreading the campus beyond between-class walking distances and of exposing students to the hazards of crossing Capitol Boulevard. These academic uses should move into the central campus. However, new housing in the district across Capitol Boulevard would benefit from proximity to Downtown, the river, Ann Morrison Park and Boise State University.

Commercial uses along Broadway serve both the university and the greater community and will continue to evolve as both Boise and Boise State University grow.

The greatest potential conflicts between the university and its neighbors are parking, traffic and displacement of housing. If the university can consolidate parking, promote pedestrian circulation and transit use and expand housing within walking distance, it will maintain a mutually healthy relationship with its neighbors. Collaboration with the City on a downtown circulator and with Valley Regional Transit on public bus services will benefit Boise State University and neighbors alike.

Commercial properties diminish the presence of Boise State University on Capitol Boulevard.

University Square provides a potential market for other pedestrian-oriented uses along University Drive.

Health Sciences-Riverside exists somewhat autonomously from the remainder of campus.
Campus Uses Analysis

The primary academic core is well developed around the original campus quad. A second academic nucleus is emerging around the College of Engineering. A third but different core is the athletic group occupying the northeast campus.

The existing College of Applied Technology buildings form a small cluster but are confined by other unrelated, surrounding uses. The industrial program requirements for vocational training buildings and yards separate this area on its perimeter. There are compelling reasons for the relocation of these facilities off-campus.

The Student Union Building has been peripheral to the primary academic core but is now centered among the four groups, and has been reinforced by the Student Recreation Center. Food services are lacking at the west end of campus. Student services, other than those in the Student Union Building, are somewhat scattered.

Campus housing is well disposed around the campus; however, the John Barnes Towers are remote and disconnected from other residential uses and from food service and other activities at the Student Union.

The Library is related to the existing core of arts and sciences uses.

Athletics form a strong presence on the eastern sector of campus.

The Morrison Center for the Performing Arts is midway between the campus core and Boise’s cultural district.

Student housing reinforces a traditional collegial strength of learning and living on-campus.
CAMPUS FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Building Orientation Analysis

Orientation of buildings, or the way in which they present their public face and front doors, was clear and consistent in the original academic core. As the perimeter of the original quadrangle was built out, the intended orientation toward the river and the foothills was lost. University Drive replaced Campus Lane as the primary access street, and the whole campus became ambiguous in its orientation. The original Administration Building found its backside embarrassingly presented to the public, while new buildings were oriented according to the particulars of the sites they occupied. Most of Boise State University's buildings along the river seem to have an undecided or cautious relationship with the river. Although upper floors have windows looking out on this beautiful environment, there are mostly inconspicuous entrances, reserved parking lots, randomly placed trash dumpsters and very little in the way of gathering places along the Boise River Greenbelt edge. Collectively, buildings tend to form a row along the river and lack a relationship to each other.

The Student Union is an important landmark at the corner of University Drive and Lincoln Avenue. It occupies a location between two unrelated campus geometries: that of the original quadrangle, and that established by the gymnasium and Bronco Circle. The Student Union Building and the intramural fields make this difficult transition with some grace, yet dislocation of circulation systems between the parts of the campus that they separate is all too evident. Despite the gregarious nature of its programs, the building is quite introverted, with little hint of its many activities from University Drive.

Public entrances to the stadium are surprisingly inconspicuous for the numbers of people who use them. Clearly marked pedestrian routes across the stadium parking lots leading to stadium entrances are also lacking. In fact, the needs of those on foot seem to have been abandoned east of the Taco Bell Arena. Orientation is wholly dominated by the stadium and by surface parking lots.

The College of Applied Technology buildings are inconsistently oriented. Some of the original buildings face University Drive while others have obscure entrances. The vehicular storage and work yards awkwardly face recreational buildings to the north. Bronco Circle and the vestiges of the gymnasium approach axis remain the principal influences on building orientation.

The river side of buildings along Campus Lane has in places been separated as a service alley. The Morrison Center has a formal entrance facing the river yet most users enter from the parking lot.

Building orientation around the central quadrangle was originally consistent and clear.
Visitor Arrival Analysis

For a stranger to Boise, the campus is remarkably difficult to identify. Street directions might get one to the right vicinity, but evidence of Boise State University’s presence on Capitol Boulevard is minimal. At the east end of the campus, the stadium gives a gigantic clue – but finding a destination on campus presents another set of uncertainties.

In the approach from Capitol Boulevard via University Drive, the campus image is diminished by overhead commercial signage, scattered surface parking, sparse landscaping and a lack of campus identity. The existing campus identity sign does not compensate for the lack of substantial university buildings facing the boulevard.

The intersection of Capitol Boulevard and University Drive is excessively wide, although the addition of housing and retail on the south side of University Drive makes it more hospitable. For those who park west of Capitol Boulevard, the street presents a formidable barrier. An additional pedestrian crossing of Capitol between University Drive and the Boise River is needed now.

The sense of campus environment at Broadway and University Drive is diminished by commercial signage on the west side of the street and a lack of appropriate landscaping in the Stadium parking lot. Once on University Drive, clear information to visitor or general student parking is not obvious. University Drive itself has a character more consistent with an urban arterial than a landscaped entry to the campus.

Boise Avenue and Beacon Street via Lincoln Avenue is a pleasant entry to Boise State University but unclear in direction and way-finding.

For transit users arriving at campus, transit stops, shelters and amenities such as route and schedule information are inadequate.

The east gateway to Boise State University from Broadway fails to provide an inviting campus setting.

The Administration Building has no welcoming entrance facing University Drive and most arriving visitors.

Only larger buildings to the right hint of Boise State University’s presence on Capitol Boulevard to those arriving from the south and the airport.
CAMPUS FRAMEWORK ANALYSIS

Open Space Analysis

The quality of the greenspace system at Boise State University varies widely from one area to another. The original quadrangle is well defined by the buildings which enclose it yet it is not physically and visually well connected to the Boise River Greenbelt. The campus lacks good spaces for passive recreation. The best examples are the Student Union Building dining terrace and the Business Building front terrace. The intramural field adjacent to the Student Union is an important organizing element between adjacent uses as well as a precious resource for general recreation. The west end of campus is dominated by parking lots and lacks an organizing open space and pedestrian system. Orientation of buildings to the greenbelt is inconsistent. The College of Applied Technology is physically disconnected from the main campus and lacks a relationship to structured open space and pedestrian systems.

One of the most important yet underutilized spaces on campus is the river edge. By earlier legal agreement, Boise State University owns the land along the river to its north property line (the 6,500 CFS water line of the Boise River). As part of this agreement, the City of Boise is granted a 70-foot access easement measured from the 6,500 CFS water line south for the purposes of maintaining public utilities in Campus Lane and to provide public greenbelt access (pedestrian and bicycle). Virtually all of the existing paved area of Campus Lane falls within this easement. The design for Campus Lane between the Morrison Center and the pedestrian bridge is much improved for pedestrians and bicyclists. That quality needs to be extended to Broadway Avenue. While it is valuable as an outlet for events traffic, its primary purpose is to provide an improved environment for pedestrians and bicyclists along Campus Lane between Capitol Boulevard and Broadway Avenue.

The beauty of the river edge needs to be made a part of the campus. Open space is a fundamental part of the campus environment and an organizing element for buildings. A riverside easement ensures access for all via the Greenbelt.
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.

In the central quadrangle, primary paths are generous in width and direct in route. The continuity of the path system breaks down outside the central quadrangle.
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.

Bicycle circulation is an appropriate use at Campus Lane.
Parking Analysis

The original campus was not planned with extensive parking resources in mind. As parking needs grew, so 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.

Surface parking lots dominate both the west...

...and east ends of 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.
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.

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.

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.

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.
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

Keeping in mind these general implications, the master plan includes new construction at the core of the campus (Fig. 2). This framework is distinct from its predecessor in the following ways:

- A strong focus on research, and therefore on facilities that can attract distinguished researchers.
- A shift away from applied technology programs on campus, relocating them to the places where they have direct application.
- A growing trend toward interdisciplinary research where new facilities may be shared by several programs or departments.

New facilities committed include 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.