In the past, the Boise State campus was perceived as being remote from downtown, but as the university’s contribution to the city’s business, culture and recreation has grown, so the campus has become recognized as a part of downtown by many. Strengthening of the ‘cultural corridor’ along Capitol Boulevard and 9th Street has further reinforced that link. Inclusion of the campus by the downtown transit circulator will further unite them. Julia Davis Park and the river greenway thus become downtown amenities. The campus master plan acknowledges this by advocating a re-orientation of university buildings toward the river and the park, and by proposing additional footbridges across the river to the park.

Campus form was first established by the central Administration Building quadrangle that was completed in the 1970s. Another strong influence is University Drive: originally the southern boundary of the campus, it increasingly functions as a spine along which more recent buildings are ranged.

A new organizing feature proposed in the master plan is a realigned Stadium Drive, which will connect University Drive to Campus Lane mid-way between Broadway and Lincoln Avenue. It will provide access to athletic facilities on either side, and to housing by the river. Stadium Drive can only be completed when the programs of the College of Applied Technology have been relocated, and the buildings removed.

South of University Drive between Denver Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, the campus will retain the imprint of existing streets as university buildings replace existing development. Streets will give way to walks and driveable pathways within generous open spaces, in which existing utility runs will be preserved.

The west end of the campus has previously lacked any clear form, being dominated by parking lots and formerly by commercial development along Capitol Boulevard. Now that the frontage has been secured by the university, important new facilities can be sited there, asserting the presence of the university at the south entry to downtown. Surface parking lots will be replaced by new buildings and a green quadrangle, similar in scale to the original, central quad, but distinctly different in appearance and function. Development along Capitol Boulevard on both sides of University Drive will define that street as the main entry to the campus; a distinction that has been lacking, and one that will give clear orientation to visitors.

University Drive at Broadway will remain the principal access from the east, although general traffic will be restricted from using University Drive between Euclid Avenue and Lincoln Avenue. The only through route for general traffic on campus will be University Drive from Capitol Boulevard via Lincoln and Beacon Street to Broadway, but since most traffic using University Drive today has the university as its origin or destination, little change to university traffic volumes on Beacon is anticipated. The eastern entrance at University Drive and Broadway will continue to be the major point of access for athletic events and for other east campus destinations.

The character and clarity of the campus at the central quadrangle will be extended to the remainder of campus.
From its inception, the Boise State University campus has been designed around pedestrians. This has directed the design of open spaces and their full integration with a growing system of footpaths. As parking demand increased, and access to numerous small parking lots grew, so the primacy of pedestrians was compromised. It is a central tenet of this master plan to restore a safe, convenient and agreeable environment for all who walk in the campus. Removal of small parking lots to peripheral lots and garages will remove the need for dual-use pathways, shared by cars and pedestrians. There will remain some exceptions: occasional truck access to the Morrison Center from the south will be necessary, because of the internal configuration of the building. Also, emergency and maintenance vehicles will need to use footpaths from time to time, so paving must be wide enough and strong enough to support their loads. The prevailing principle, however, will be freedom of movement throughout the campus for pedestrians, through a series of carefully designed open spaces, supplemented by consistent systems of lighting and way-finding signage.

The open space system of the campus has grown from the orientation of the first buildings toward the Boise River. The space between them became the central quadrangle, to which all campus paths and open spaces, and Julia Davis Park connect. As the term ‘campus’ implies, the whole university site is in a sense an urban open space with buildings configured within it. The arrangement of those buildings, and the directions in which they and their principal entries are oriented, determine the character of the place and the way in which people move through the whole. The task of the facilities master plan is to recognize how the succession of spaces and circulation through them can be optimized and extended. Most buildings and spaces are thoroughly established and will remain relatively unchanged, so opportunities for improvement depend on those parts of the campus that are likely to change and the ways in which they relate to fixed features.

An objective in amending and extending the network of footpaths is to make passage between campus destinations direct, safe and pleasurable. Thus the location and orientation of building entrances is important: both those of existing buildings and others yet to be built. Points of conflict for pedestrians with vehicles and bicycles must be minimized by eliminating routes that need not cross footpaths, and by improving sight lines wherever bicycles and walkers may interact. A clearly defined, safe and convenient system of bicycle routes will remove many, though not all, cyclists from footpaths. This is the functional circulation system that must be accommodated in the spaces between buildings. Much of the pleasurable aspect of walking on campus derives from the harmony in design between open spaces and the buildings around them. Similar in size to the central quadrangle, though different in appearance and function will be the new west quadrangle. This will organize and relate the buildings around it to one another, and to the circulation system. Truck access and limited parking access to the Morrison Center will be maintained in an otherwise pedestrian oriented environment. A smaller new open space at the west end of the campus will flank University Drive where it joins Capitol Boulevard, establishing this as the main entrance to the whole campus.

In the eastern part of the campus, relocation of the applied technology programs will enable creation of a new intramural playing field east of the expanded Student Union and south of the Kinesiology building. This will restore open space lost to the Tennis Center. The former football practice field north of the stadium, though reduced in size by stadium expansion and by construction of the indoor practice facility, has been conserved as a green open space fronting on the river and preserving special views to the river and the foothills from within the stadium.

An additional intramural field is planned at Lincoln and Beacon Streets where it will also act as a campus entrance amenity from the south.

In the area south of University Drive and north of Beacon Street, walkways and open spaces will largely follow former street alignments, with lesser open spaces included with development in each block. This constitutes a step down in scale of spaces and architecture toward the residential neighborhood south of Beacon. In the other direction, north of the campus, there is a step up in scale to the Greenbelt and to Julie Davis Park.

The Greenbelt corridor along Campus Lane is given prominence by its redevelopment as primarily a pedestrian open space. Special pavement, lighting and furnishings create a pedestrian precinct for the central section of Campus Lane between the Morrison Center and the Amphitheater. Between the Amphitheater and Broadway Avenue, the bike path is to be improved with a wider paved area, new lighting and new furnishings. For all existing buildings along the Greenbelt, long term parking (with the exception of dormitory parking) is to be relocated elsewhere while loading and trash storage are to be screened from direct view with architectural enclosures and evergreen landscape plantings.

Landscaping of campus open spaces is mostly lawn with formal and semi-formal plantings of trees. Ornamental beds are used sparingly to provide special accents. At the Greenbelt along the Boise River, the ordered landscape of the campus gives way to a transitional landscape of sustainable unknown grasses and natural riparian vegetation.

Trees are used in patterns that reinforce the campus open space and path systems. In some cases existing trees can be included in this pattern, may be moved to conform, or may be removed. As an example, some older evergreen trees in the central quadrangle are in awkward positions where they contribute very little to the overall sense of space and, in fact, block important views and offer little shade for seating areas. These should be removed. Species will be varied to avoid monoculture and to offer a variety of seasonal colors. However, within a single quadrangle space or a single segment of path corridor, a dominant tree species used in a strong repetitive order makes a clearer definition of campus organization. In isolated courtyards or passages, single specimen trees of a contrasting species can give a special character to that space. Now what is lacking most from the campus is the unifying background plantings of trees.

Decorative landscape lighting can augment basic pedestrian area and path lighting by reinforcing trees and buildings as edges of outdoor space. It can also enhance general lighting levels.
Boise State University is located in a sector of central Boise that has a well-developed local street system. However, a consistent network of larger streets has historically been impeded by the limited number of river crossings and the continuous geologic terraces or “benches” that roughly parallel the river in one to two mile intervals, making street extensions in a north-south direction difficult due to the 80 to 100 foot vertical rises with each terrace. In this part of Boise, east-west circulation is limited by the end of large regional parks named for Julia Davis, Ann Morrison, and Katherine Albertson. Conversely, the lack of east-west transportation corridors in the Boise State University area is also the reason why the university neighborhood has retained its attractiveness and viability as an in-town residential area.

In the past, University Drive has been an important east-west link through the area, but recent traffic counts show almost all traffic using that street having its origin or destination in the university. Beacon Street and Boise Avenue serve the neighborhood to the south and carry some through traffic. As more university facilities are developed on the south side of University Drive, so the seriousness of this wide street as a barrier to north-south movement has become more acute.

An important proposal of this master plan is to recognize that University Drive has changed its function from through street to principal campus access drive, and to reconfigure the street accordingly. Sufficient capacity for through traffic will be maintained along University Drive and Lincoln Avenue between Capitol Boulevard and Beacon Street. This section will be improved with turning lanes, traffic signals, planted medians, bike lanes, street trees and improved sidewalks.

As transit access to the campus is improved, and as on-campus housing is increased, and as bicycle facilities are enhanced, it can be expected that parking demand per person will decrease. Coupled with this is a plan for gradual increases in parking fees to offset the cost of building and operating parking facilities. Peak demand occurred in the late morning for many years, but recently, cultural and athletic events in the evenings have created the greatest demand. Because of the expense of providing parking, it is proposed that parking provision on campus remain tied to academic demand, and that