

CHAPTER 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1:1 PURPOSE

The Landscape Master Plan (LMP) is intended to encourage unity in the design of the campus landscape over time, so that the individually designed parts of the landscape relate properly with each other, regardless of when they are built. The LMP brings a balanced perspective to landscape design decision making, expanding the determinants of design beyond the traditional values of aesthetics and use to include water conservation and long-term maintenance. This includes promoting the landscape as an opportunity for learning, seeking out methods to test the performance of green infrastructure through living laboratories. It recommends exploring and identifying means and methods that foster stewardship and encourage sustainable practices.

The LMP can guide the evaluation of desirable alternatives for landscape change, including maintaining an interconnected, healthy tree canopy and the long-term health and development of the urban green infrastructure on campus. The project's Steering Committee members, the Facilities Management Review Committee (FMRC) and FMRC Landscape Subcommittee are an integral part of this conversation. These changes are critical to the creation of a University-wide message that the campus is designed and planned to facilitate learning, social interaction and to answer fundamental user needs first and foremost.

The LMP is the document that can coordinate efforts across master plans to create outdoor spaces that answer the well-established needs of students, faculty and staff (see survey results, Chapter 1:6 Public Input Summary). This document's audience includes University benefactors, student representatives, staff, administrators, and consultants employed to design the campus landscape. The vision of this document is to facilitate a path toward intelligent campus landscape design, responsive and adaptable to appropriate development changes and climatic change to create a cohesive campus image that is appropriate and inviting.

1:2 PROCESS

In the summer of 2016, MGB+A and Psomas were retained to work with the University Landscape Steering Committee and prepare a landscape master plan for The University of Utah campus. The planning process began with a series of site evaluations (see Chapter 3: Existing Conditions) and meetings with many campus constituents, including the public (see Chapter 1:6 Public Input Summary). Issues and potential alternatives for improvement were developed. These ideas were reviewed, critiqued and refined, yielding the recommendations contained in the LMP (see Chapter 4: Landscape Typology & Area Guidelines and Chapter 5: Landscape System Guidelines). The LMP was prepared in collaboration with MGB+A, Psomas and The University of Utah.





1:3 THE POWER OF LANDSCAPES

CAMPUS LANDSCAPES ARE MEDIUMS OF COMMUNICATION.

There are two types of messages embodied in landscapes: functional messages and symbolic messages. Functional messages communicate landscape uses. Symbolic messages transmit messages about institutional values and priorities and are often seen as more true than functional messages (Source: Strange 2001, *Education by Design: Creating Campus Learning Environments That Work*, p.17). A campus bike rack sends the functional message 'park your bike here'. If a bike rack is located on the back of the building, far from the entrance, it communicates a different symbolic message than if the bike rack is placed on the front of the building and adjacent to the front entry. In both cases, the functional message is the same: 'park your bike here'. But in the case of the bike rack far from the building entrance, the message is 'both you and your bike are not valued enough to place this rack at the front of the building' (Source: Waite 2012, *Campus Landscaping: Impact on Recruitment and Retention*, p. 20).

The University of Utah campus is currently sending conflicting messages about how it prioritizes students, faculty, and staff. Clear functional and symbolic messages can only be established through systematic design changes in pedestrian spaces and a unified landscape aesthetic, that together, will communicate the overarching symbolic message that the heart of the University is the individuals who occupy its grounds daily.

THE CAMPUS IMAGE IS ONE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S PRIMARY TOOLS FOR SELF-PROMOTION.

Admissions directors have stated that prospective students form an opinion of a campus in the first ten minutes of their visit, and in the next thirty minutes they decide whether to rule the college out or to continue the application process (Source: Kenney et al. 2005, *Mission and place: Strengthening Learning and Community through Campus Design*, p. 76).

What do prospective students see in the first 10 to 30 minutes on the University of Utah campus? How many are able to navigate without getting lost? Will they leave with a strong, positive memory of campus? In a student poll published by Art & Science Group (2004), students were asked, "What aspects of the campus visit had the greatest positive influence on students' college choice?" The results are telling:

- 28% campus image
- 28% friendly people
- 18% nice staff
- 17% academic offers

CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTS INFLUENCE STUDENT RETENTION THROUGH FOSTERING SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT.

Key to fostering community and engagement are physical environments that support and even catalyze social interaction. While campus environments do not cause social interaction, their presence, design, arrangement, and flexibility influence whether or not social interactions can occur (Source: Strange 2001, *Education by Design: Creating Campus Learning Environments That Work*, p. 41). The University can encourage social interaction by providing spaces to facilitate it.

Spaces that encourage individuals to linger with others are key to fostering a sense of community and engagement. This sense of community and engagement is an essential aspect of student retention (Source: Waite 2012, *Campus Landscaping: Impact on Recruitment and Retention*, p. 73).

CAMPUS LANDSCAPES INFLUENCE LEARNING AND MEMORY FORMATION.

Memory is lodged in the brain in the same location as emotion—thus memory of place and emotion are inextricably linked. Emotion is tied to memory and both are tied to place.

"Physical features of a campus can either hinder or promote learning" (Source: Strange, 2001, *Education by Design: Creating Campus Learning Environments That Work*). Brain growth—the actual dynamics of neural growth and connections in the brain—is stimulated by enriched environments and hindered by dull environments (Source: Howard 2006, *The Owner's Manual for the Brain*, p. 522). One of the two periods of incredible brain growth and neural connections is greatest in the human brain between the ages of 14-21—some even place the point of brain maturity as late as 25 (Source: Howard 2006, *The Owner's Manual for the Brain*, p.94). Creating spaces that enrich and stimulate through visual legibility, coherence, complexity and mystery through the use of color, texture, arrangements, and light will communicate the University's mission to promote learning.

1:4 PRINCIPLES

The LMP has identified six key principles that, if embraced, will reinforce the Campus Master Plan's vision of campus as an intelligent landscape. An intelligent landscape has the ability to vary its state or action in response to varying situations, varying requirements, and past experience. Campus should not be viewed as a static object to be achieved in some ideal state. Rather, campus should be viewed as a living and evolving space that communicates a powerful idea: no matter one's background or perceived limitations, one can learn.

HUMAN CONNECTION

There is a deep, emotional significance attached to the campus landscape by many constituent groups whose formative years and daily lives are intimately associated with the campus environment. This association can evolve into a true affection for place that can remain meaningful throughout a lifetime, and influence recruitment, retention, and giving. A coherent landscape with a clear identity will enhance the human connection.

THE EXPERIENCE OF NATURE

The campus landscape is significant in the connection it offers to the natural world of plants, upon which all life depends. In a world of virtual experience and detachment from nature, connections with the outdoor world become more significant. The designed landscape is a cultural expression of our relationship to nature. A campus design that consistently recognizes the timeless value of the experience of nature will serve the campus community in powerful ways.

SUSTAINABILITY

A well-planned campus landscape will support the University's commitment to sustainability by enhancing ecosystem services such as cleansing of air and water, regulating micro and macro climate, soil building and erosion control, and improvement of human health and well-being. These benefits extend to the community surrounding the campus as well. Thoughtful, well-designed and well maintained outdoor spaces will also promote sustainability by providing elegantly simple access to great facilities for walking, bicycling, use of public transportation, and recycling.

AESTHETIC VALUE

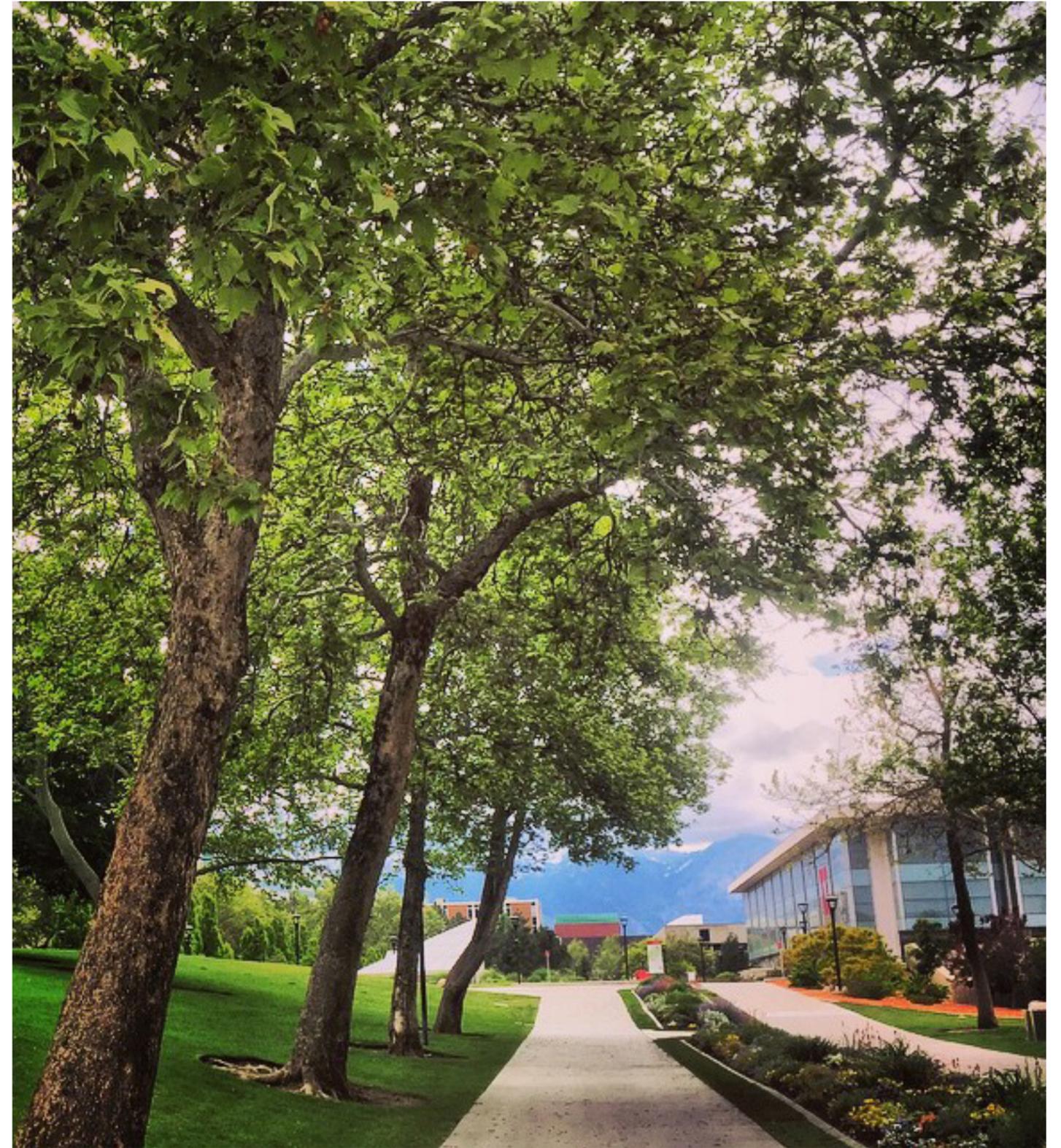
A beautiful campus is necessary to a full education. Attention to the quality of daily experience through the architecture and landscape of the campus is important for its own sake, but also as a reference that will guide the values of graduates and future leaders. The positive psychological benefits of beautiful surroundings are just as important as more measurable functional requirements of the landscape.

FUNCTIONAL USE

A well-designed and well-maintained landscape will serve the needs of campus constituents for functional space. Well-structured places for circulation, access, socializing, recreation, and gathering serve the needs of campus students, faculty, staff, and visitors.

EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE

A properly prepared, well-ordered, intelligent, and purposeful landscape can bring a commensurate level of order and efficiency to the maintenance of the landscape.



Sycamore allée leading to Marriott Library.

1:5 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

The following long-term goals set a positive framework of preservation, renewal and management for the future vision of the campus landscape. As a companion document, the LMP supplements the Campus Master Plan landscape-related goals and policies. The landscape recommendations presented in chapters 4 and 5 support these goals and strategies by prescribing a vision for specific improvements.

Goal 1: Stewardship

Provide stewardship to enhance the distinctive natural and physical attributes of the campus.

A well-planned campus landscape can enhance ecosystem services such as cleansing of air and water; regulating micro and macro climate; soil building and erosion control; habitat enhancement; and improvement of human health and well-being. These benefits extend beyond the campus boundary to the surrounding community. A tree canopy that will connect primary corridors, provide shade, contribute to the character, stability and dignity of the campus, shape the spatial order and reduce the mass of large buildings.

Strategies

G1-1 Site and design new buildings and related landmarks to preserve and enhance key views into, within and from the campus.

G1-2 Develop a long-range management plan to sustain mature trees as an important component of the campus structure and environment.

G1-3 Emphasize diversity in plant species to promote species health, visual diversity, teaching and research. Incorporate the principles of sustainable design in the design, preparation, installation and maintenance of projects.

G1-4 Further refine the recommended plant palette (found in Design Requirements University of Utah Supplement) to include a hydrozone schedule.

G1-5 Develop stormwater standards for landscape islands in parking lots and for all of campus.

G1-6 The siting and design of new or renovated open spaces should consider climactic and other environmental factors to encourage appropriate use of the campus environment.

Goal 2: Campus Open Space

Create and maintain a campus image of buildings in a climate-adapted landscape that invests in new and enhanced open spaces.

The appearance of the landscape reflects on the image of the University. As campus building density increases, the value of open space increases in importance throughout the campus. An important aspect of improving the campus image is to implement a program of fundraising and investment for the open space system.

Strategies

G2-1 Implement an ongoing program of investment to restore and renew the campus landscape.

G2-2 Implement a program of strategic investment in new and enhanced campus open spaces.

G2-3 Preserve, enhance and protect the qualities of distinctive and high quality open spaces from inappropriate new campus developments or other negative impacts.

G2-4 Plan new building and open space improvements jointly and with the same degree of quality to ensure each new investment elevates the quality of campus life. Ensure that new developments respond to the core landscape.

G2-5 Convey an image distinct from the adjacent community through well-planted perimeter open spaces and gateways on the edges of the central campus.

G2-6 Preserve and enhance important distant views across the valley and to neighboring mountains.



Goal 3: Arboretum & Learning Labs

Provide places of academic and social interaction, outdoor classroom space and places to study. Incorporate the historic goals of species experimentation and diversity of the Arboretum.

The campus landscape offers a significant connection to the natural world, most directly through its role as The State Arboretum. In our modern world of increasing virtual experience and detachment from nature, connections with the natural world become more meaningful. A campus design that consistently recognizes the timeless value of the experience of nature, through not only passive use but also through direct engagement, will enrich the campus experience.

Strategies

G3-1 Within new capital investments, prioritize the development of outdoor spaces that are conducive to creative educational interaction.

G3-2 Promote outdoor teaching opportunities to support diversity in the campus environment.

G3-3 Establish a Landscape Advisory Review Committee composed of faculty and staff to provide oversight to arboretum enhancement, development, and relevancy.

G3-4 Upgrade software to support expansion of the online Tree Tour to the entire campus and to include historic and tree-specific data.

G3-5 Support and facilitate the mission of the Arboretum through experimentation of tree species in the exploration of species that can thrive on campus.

Goal 4: Landscape Character

Provide and maintain sustainable, quality landscapes that enhance the character and form of the campus landscape, providing useful outdoor spaces that accommodate individual, educational, social and recreational activities.

A campus landscape design that utilizes native, naturalized and adaptive plants capable of sustaining growth with limited supplementary water as well as large shade trees, will inspire the local character and flora of the campus. Many plants that fit this category are old favorites and many are species yet to be seen on campus. A coherent and artful landscape with a clear identity will enhance a connection to place.

Strategies

G4-1 Plan, design, and manage a typology of regionally appropriate landscape materials that respond harmoniously to the existing character of historic and iconic areas of campus.

G4-2 Reserve core campus space for functions that serve or directly involve students.

G4-3 Define a program of investments for places of interaction, and a sequence for implementation.

G4-4 Ensure site furnishings are well designed, durable and relate to the context landscape types of the campus environment (see Chapter 5: Landscape System Guidelines).

G4-5 Establish training for landscape management and maintenance to develop improved and consistent practices for the landscape types within the central campus (see Chapter 4: Landscape Typologies).

Goal 5: Accessibility

Provide and maintain a welcome, safe and accessible campus environment.

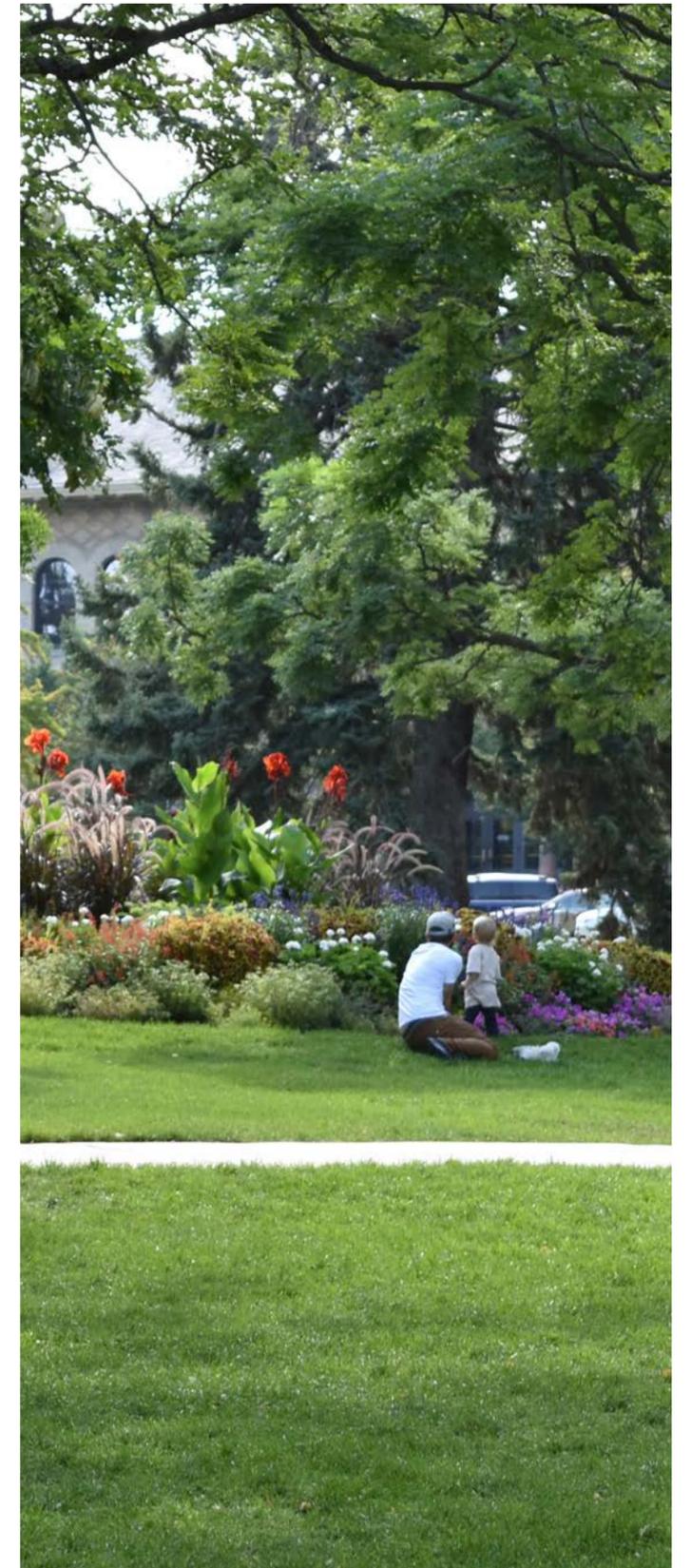
The campus landscape is the site of constant movement as the University population moves on, off and through it on a daily basis. The increasing traffic at gateways, plazas and on pathways and roads emphasizes the need for improved and clarified pedestrian conditions. The University must be rigorous in providing safe and accessible paths of travel for its disabled community across the challenging, but ever-improving campus landscape.

Strategies

G5-1 Plan, design and manage routes within the central campus for the primary use of pedestrians. Where space permits, access routes for various types of vehicles shall be established separating pedestrians from vehicular traffic.

G5-2 Address circulation conflict areas involving bicycles, pedestrians, delivery and maintenance vehicles.

G5-3 Integrate accessible access into main routes, avoiding separate ramps where feasible.



1:6 PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

2013 Survey Summary

An opinion survey conducted in 2013, indicated that campus users believe the outdoor environment is important and that they are generally satisfied with the existing outdoor campus conditions. Respondents were slightly less satisfied than users of other universities (Echert 2013). The survey also asked what were “favorite” and “undesirable” spaces on campus. Those results were synthesized for the 2017 LMP and are shown in the Combined Survey Responses map (see page 17).

Favorite outdoor spaces (2013 survey)

- Outside the Union Building
- Presidents Circle
- Library Fountain area

Most unpleasant outdoor spaces (2013 survey)

- Social Work Building / S BEH
- HPER building areas
- Library Plaza

2017 Survey Summary

The 2013 survey focused on student satisfaction of various outdoor elements. The question about favorite space and least desirable space was asked open-endedly and included no additional review. In the 2017 Survey, the LMP team asked these same questions again with the goal to obtain more specific data and analysis (See: Appendix A).

Favorite outdoor spaces (2017 survey)

- Presidents Circle lawn
- Health Sciences Education Building west courtyard (staff/faculty response)
- Huntsman Center exterior space (staff/faculty response)
- Library Plaza Fountain (student response)
- Open lawn between Student Union and campus store (student response)

Most unpleasant outdoor spaces (2017 survey)

- Annex building
- Maintenance parking lot
- TRAX areas
- Greek Row
- Walkway and pedestrian tunnel near stadium

OUTDOOR SPACE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Campus Outdoor Survey

The 2017 Campus Outdoor Survey results demonstrate a need for aesthetically appealing spaces that provide shade, seating, usable lawn areas and food options. These elements were discovered by asking respondents what is missing from undesirable campus spaces. The responses were further reinforced by the observation that the most beloved spaces on campus exhibit many if not all of these conditions.

Quiet Spaces for Respite

Spaces that provide separation from distracting noises/stimuli and that provide opportunity for reflection and meditation are greatly desired. 71% of respondents indicated that this space type is either somewhat or very important. For these respondents, the success of secluded spaces is due to shade, seating, good views, gardens, the absence of noise, and privacy. There are a few spaces on campus that exhibit these qualities, however, it was reported that they are often utilized by people smoking cigarettes, rendering the spaces unusable by others. Privacy and enclosure are important characteristics of secluded spaces but not at the expense of user safety. Presidents Circle is listed as a space where respite can be sought but that it also lacks seating options. Many responses indicated there weren't any secluded areas for respite or that they were unfamiliar with such spaces. This is an indication that more spaces of this type should be created.

Presidents Circle

Per the 2017 survey results, the most loved, used and iconic space on campus is Presidents Circle. It is loved primarily for the shady open lawn and its beautiful landscape. Its classical form, symmetrical layout and traditional campus character most likely add to its success.

Landscape Preference Studies

Outside sources conducting landscape preference studies support the findings of both the 2013 and 2017 University of Utah surveys: that open park-like landscapes with good visibility, that promote a sense of prospect (views and visibility) and refuge are most preferred (Source: Appleton 1975, The Experience of Landscape), and that adequate seating is an important component of outdoor spaces (Source: Whyte 1980, The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces).



Marriott Library entrance plaza.

Key Findings

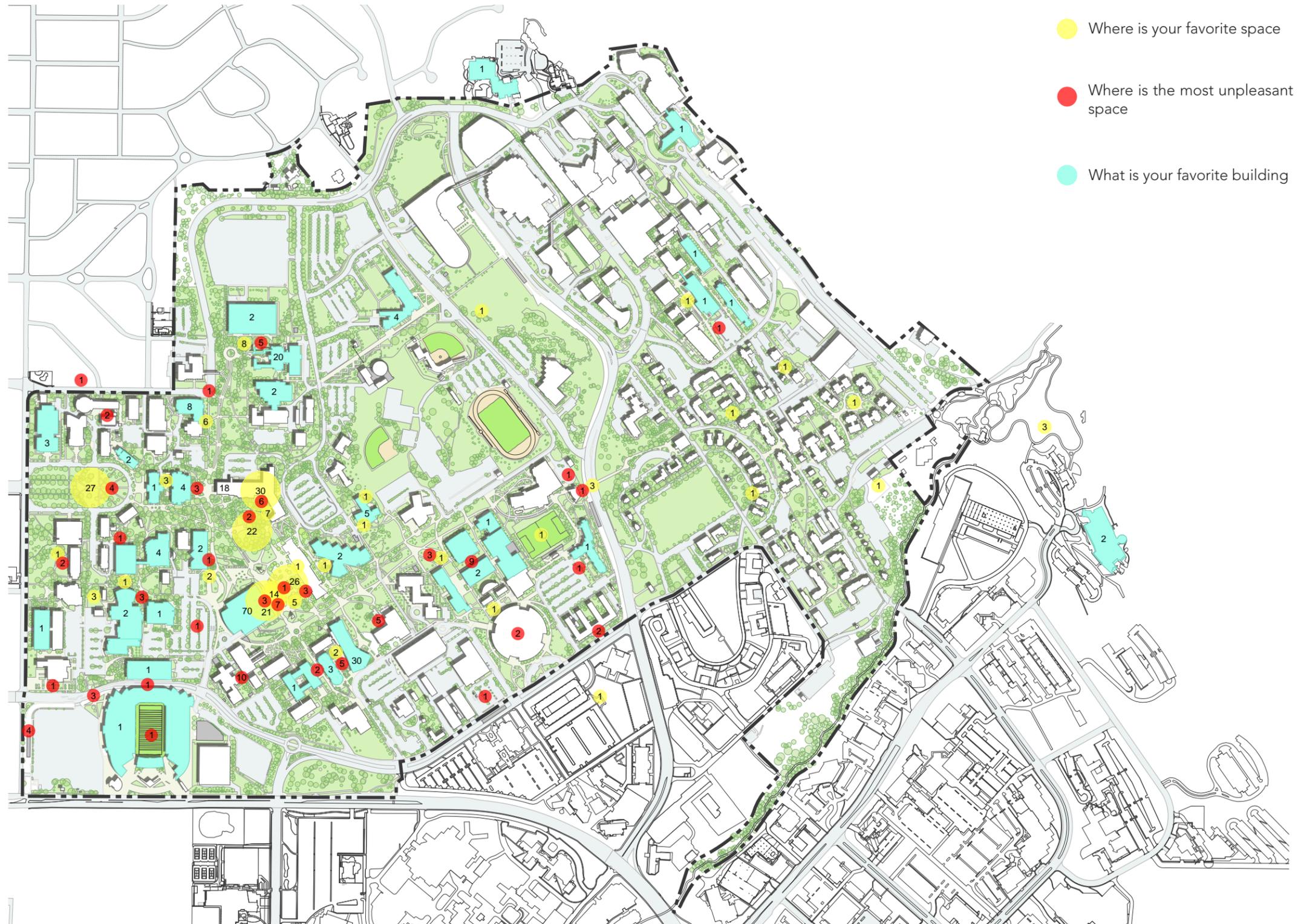
The findings indicate a key to providing more iconic and loved spaces on campus is the inclusion of the same character-making elements found in memorable spaces, namely a shade canopy, usable lawn, and adequate seating in strategic places, good views, and the inclusion of food options where feasible.

These types of spaces should be planned primarily along main pedestrian routes where they can become hubs for socialization, special events, and outdoor living in general. The spaces must be planned as a sequence leading the user from one area to the next.

Marriott Library Plaza Assessment

In the 2013 and 2017 surveys, as well as during an informal Earth Fest table event, respondents indicated that the Marriott Library Plaza Fountain was a very desirable space. Based on survey responses, it is likely that this space is well liked because of the movable seating, the presence of shade, lawn, a water feature and food trucks. The expansive space between the Marriott Library Plaza Fountain and the library itself was rated as one of the worst spaces on campus, potentially due to the expanse of concrete with no shade or seating. Currently, the plaza functions as a wide pedestrian corridor.

Due to the visibility, location and numbers of pedestrians to the library plaza, it is a prime for improvements to make the space more inviting and comfortable. It has the potential to become one of the more iconic and loved spaces on campus.



Map: Combined Survey Responses.

1:6 SUMMARY OF LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

EMBRACE THE CAMPUS CLIMATE THROUGH APPROPRIATE LANDSCAPE DESIGN

The Salt Lake City valley is uniquely positioned along the Wasatch Front. It often receives significant precipitation in winter as snow and some years during summer monsoons. Consequentially, unlike the surrounding semi-arid region, it sustains a plethora of plant species from a range of climatic zones. The University has developed a recommended plant list that reflects this climatic flexibility: from Magnolia to Utah Juniper, from Dwarf Korean Lilac to Red Yucca. This impressive variety serves as the basis for the LMP recommendation to utilize native or adapted plant material as well as hydrozoning as the primary organizing factor for plant selection in each plant bed; grouping plants by hydrozone is key to meeting water conservation goals. The development of these zones should be a top priority in the creation of a visually coherent, intelligent, and beautiful campus landscape that is unafraid of plant density and large massings. A framework for future planting design is presented in Chapter 4: Landscape Typologies & Area Guidelines.

ESTABLISH A UNIFIED LANDSCAPE FRAMEWORK FOR THE CAMPUS AS A WHOLE

The implementation of area and system guidelines will create a cohesive campus image that will reinforce the goals and guiding principles of the University. The landscape design will be purposefully organized in a pattern of landscape types, including: Campus Edges & Gateways; Campus Open Space; Corridors & Connections; Plazas & Courtyards; Building Landscapes; and Parking & Service Areas. These types are based on use, location, and configuration in the campus landscape plan. The following are specific recommendations related to the development of the various campus landscape types (see Chapter 4: Landscape Typologies & Area Guidelines for a full list of recommendations).

- Develop a variety of courtyards and plazas that encourage social interaction and relate appropriately to adjacent buildings and circulation paths.
- Develop a Campus Open Space Plan that designates prime open space, including campus sports fields designated for general campus recreation and not exclusive use by the athletics department, and ensure that it will be preserved in the face of future development.
- Develop a tree canopy that clusters large shade trees along all primary, secondary and street corridors.
- Revitalize major malls and exterior spaces.
- In major public open spaces, streets, service and connective landscapes, maintain an aesthetic of simplicity, restraint and proper institutional scale that supports the overall structure of the campus plan.

DESIGN FOR MAINTENANCE

The landscape design should include strong consideration of future requirements of maintenance, including water use. The general philosophy of new landscape projects should be to design for maintenance. The maintenance practices will need to adjust and adapt to the requirements of a landscape majority of native and adapted species with strategically located turf.

Creating a unifying vision and practice of landscape management requires the development and application of a Landscape Management Plan. This would document tree and plant locations, develop irrigation and maintenance guidelines for each planting bed, as well as the maintenance guidelines for site elements and hardscape materials. A landscape management plan is only identified here as a management need and is not included in this document. The use of such a document is critical for the continued upkeep and maintained appearance of campus.

CREATE & IMPLEMENT LANDSCAPE POLICIES TO INSURE COMPLIANCE WITH LANDSCAPE MASTER PLAN

Landscape guidelines are meaningless without the University of Utah's full commitment to the land use, spelled out in landscape design requirements that, at a minimum, inform dialogue between University stewards of the landscape and donors and developers. The longevity of a unified and beautified campus on par with the great university landscapes of the country is only achievable within the framework of this LMP's long-term vision and is a critical factor for continued student recruitment and retention.



Example of xeric landscape, on the north side of the Spencer Fox Eccles Business Building, that lacks composition, visual hierarchy and appropriate density.

IMPROVE ECOSYSTEM SERVICES

It is proposed that the design for the campus landscape improve the functional ability of the landscape to provide ecosystem services. Ecosystem services are benefits humans receive from functioning ecosystems. The services most sought include local climate regulation; soil protection; water management, use and cleansing; and providing habitat to conserve biological diversity. The following are key guidelines related to improving campus ecosystem services:

- Convert large lawn areas and traditional landscapes to a more resilient low-water use landscape, particularly in locations where this change will not compromise human use of the landscape.
- Employ many native and adapted plant materials to maintain landscape resiliency, conserve regional biodiversity, and celebrate the landscape character of the surrounding native flora.
- Improve upland stormwater management practices to reduce erosion, improve water quality, and reduce the rate of runoff.
- Take advantage of the precipitation that falls, use best practices to get through the dry spells, and implement responsible irrigation.



Exterior amenities, such as seat walls and fireplaces, facilitate social interaction in plaza gathering spaces.