Expand the Sense of Welcome, Discovery and Orientation Throughout the Campus Landscape
Observations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observations</th>
<th>Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The campus is a diverse mosaic of landscape types</td>
<td>Preserve and celebrate the rich diversity of the landscape as the campus evolves and develops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The landscape needs to function in its individual parts, but also as a whole</td>
<td>Proposed changes need to be evaluated for their effect on the immediate mosaic pieces and on the functioning of campus-wide systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Central Campus neighborhood is iconic and historic, but under intense development pressures</td>
<td>Great care should be taken to protect landscape integrity when developing the last few sites available in Central Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Central Campus neighborhood is underperforming in several critical areas, including accessibility and connectivity</td>
<td>Harness ongoing evolution as a means to preserve and strengthen the mosaic of Central Campus and its connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The East, South, and West Campus Neighborhoods each have substantial challenges and unrealized opportunities</td>
<td>Strengthening the landscape mosaic in the three peripheral neighborhoods, and improving connectivity throughout, will reduce the pressure on Central Campus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The campus is a dynamic environment that responds to the evolving needs of the institution</td>
<td>Change can be a positive force, but the timelessness and beauty of historic spaces needs to be protected as the campus evolves</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Observations about the underlying structure and essential value of the campus setting inspired initial strategies for making improvements to the workings of the whole, as well as the experience and function of individual parts.
RADIAL AXES AND VISTAS: THE BACKBONE OF PEDESTRIAN EXPERIENCE AND ORIENTATION
From the very earliest days of the University, with its founding on a hilltop with panoramic views of the surrounding landscape, the structure of the UW campus has been one of radiating systems from a strong center. This underlying structure is still very much in evidence today, and serves as an excellent orientation device in a highly complex place. Even newcomers to the campus quickly learn that if you can find your way back to one of the major axes, you can generally situate yourself on the central campus. This simple rule weakens the further you are from the center of campus, so one of the key goals of the CLF is to extend the structuring framework further from the central campus and into the peripheral neighborhoods.

**A STRONG CENTER**

There are many points of arrival on the UW campus, but as a first-time visitor, and to really get the feel of the place, there is no better place to start than Red Square. From this large central plaza, major axial landscape connections provide a very direct connection to most major areas within the Central Campus, so a general orientation to the core campus as a whole can be most easily developed. The relatively recent development of Red Square as part of the Central Parking Garage project means that both the contemporary and historic aspects of the UW campus are strongly represented in this central space. It has an open, democratic and powerful character and can clearly be read as the center, but remains an uncomfortable place to spend extended periods of time, and so can discourage gathering, which should be an important part of its function.

**RADIATING AXES**

It is one of the strong identity-giving features of the UW that each of its major axes is distinctive in multiple ways. The most figured of these spaces, capable of being appreciated from a single vantage point, is the Liberal Arts Quad. By comparison, Memorial Way is entirely defined by its major planted element - the double row of London Plane Trees. Rainier Vista has a strong architectural definition in its upper half, with a forested edge providing the framing element in its lower half. Campus Parkway/Olympic Vista is dominated by its active four lanes of roadway and it feels relatively unfigured, despite a strongly defined architectural edge and some mature trees in its center. Among these, Campus Parkway likely needs the most help in order to achieve its full potential as a major campus connection, but each of the axes has challenges that are addressed through CLF initiatives.
RAINIER VISTA
Rainier Vista was first established during the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition (AYPE) as a powerful axial view connecting the University to Mt. Rainier, and as a physical connection from the hilltop to the southeast. As the temporary buildings were torn down and new university buildings helped to figure the space, Rainier Vista has continued to accrue meaning and use as the campus has densified. For most of its history, the majority of activity along the Vista was centered in the northern part. With the opening of a light rail station at Husky Stadium in 2016, however, Rainier Vista is poised to become a major point of arrival onto campus. The University has prepared for this change in use through a new pedestrian bridge over Montlake, a new landscape design for the Montlake Triangle, and the grade separation of car and bike traffic along Pacific Place from the major pedestrian circulation.

OLYMPIC VISTA/CAMPUS PARKWAY
The idea of a major urban/university boulevard forging a strong connection into the heart of the central campus has its origins in 1923, with a design by the UW’s campus planners Bebb & Gould. In its current form, the Olympic Vista provides a clear view to the Olympic Mountains from the raised elevation of the main campus. This direct visual connection is supported by indirect physical routes between the parkway and pedestrian entry onto campus. As West Campus continues to grow in density and use, Campus Parkway will need to provide a stronger connection to the Central Campus, particularly Red Square. The city-owned, University-maintained median might also be reconfigured to allow it to serve more effectively as an open space that is used by the larger U-District community.
MEMORIAL WAY
Memorial Way was the first major entrance onto the campus that seems to have been designed for arrival by car, and as its double allee of London Plane Trees has grown to lofty heights, it has become the signature entry onto the campus. Originally, the connection to what was then known as Central Plaza was direct, although Memorial Way was always more ceremonial and not a crucial part of the dual loop circulation organization of the campus. With the construction of the Central Parking Garage and Kane Hall in 1971, however, the southern end of Memorial Way terminated at the back service zone of Kane Hall, thus making it feel like a stand-alone moment rather than a build up to the center. Conversely, the northern half became more important, and an intrinsic part of the Stevens Way network, with the closing of the 21st Ave NE exit.

THE QUAD
The Quad provides a rare moment of relative flatness and material consistency in a campus landscape with many varied slope conditions and multiple eras of architectural development. The taut lawn and hierarchy of brick pathways, in addition to the uniform scale of the architecture that surrounds the space, reinforce the strong central axis and the cross axes of the space. There is an imbalance in the two ends of the axis. The Red Square end marking a major point of arrival, whereas the northern end keeps going and then dissolves into Stevens Way without a noticeable terminus, or a strong connection to the areas beyond.
TOPOGRAPHY ANALYSIS
A FRAMEWORK FOR GROWTH
The more structured spaces of the University of Washington’s campus were initially built in the northwest corner of the campus, near the highest point of the UW property. This was an excellent way for the new campus to take advantage of its spectacular new site while also remaining connected to the emerging urban life to the north and the west. As the campus and the city grew, academic program and campus spaces have moved progressively down the slope, in some cases encountering and creating conflicts related to steep slopes and dramatic grade separations.

PROSPECT
Dramatic topography and prospect are two key underlying characteristics of the UW Campus experience. With a hilltop at the northern edge of the campus, the grade falls away in a great fan to the west, south and east, creating a great range of views to the city in the foreground, water in the middle ground and the mountains in the background. The commanding position of the campus, both connected to and apart from its context, is central to the character of the University. The rise from waterfront to hilltop also provides a diverse range of microclimates that contribute to the rich landscape variety on the campus.

DRAINAGE
The topography also contributes to landscape performance. The core campus is fortunate, for instance, to have few flooding, seep or stability issues that jeopardize the beauty or safety of the landscape. Given its size, location, and the control that it has over its own watersheds, the UW has the additional opportunity to coordinate topography with stormwater capture and treatment strategies as the water is conveyed to the bottom of the slope and to the water bodies beyond.
There are four major UW neighborhoods with very distinct characters and clear boundaries. The neighborhoods are the result of topography first and foremost, but are also informed by architectural and landscape choices that reflect attitudes during different eras of campus growth. While most iconic landscape spaces are concentrated in the Central Campus, all four neighborhoods have outstanding moments and potential for even greater landscape value. The greatest value of the neighborhoods lies in their diverse characters, which give the UW campus a tremendous range of experience. This diversity should be understood and fostered.

The strong reading of the campus neighborhoods, combined with the topography, supports both orientation and wayfinding on campus. The neighborhoods also serve different programmatic needs and have different capacities to absorb development and change. An understanding of each neighborhood’s function can be used to guide major planning efforts and maximize the efficient use of the campus while retaining the quality of the landscape.

The distinctive character of each neighborhood and the clear boundaries between them lead to an experiential and functional disconnectedness in places, particularly in relation to steep slopes and major roadways. While the individual nature of each neighborhood should be expressed, they need to feel and function as more of a collective and balanced whole than at present, so that currently underutilized parts of campus can be developed to take the pressure off over-programmed areas.
West Campus - NE Campus Parkway

Central Campus - Drumheller Fountain

South Campus - Portage Bay Vista

East Campus - Union Bay Natural Area
CENTRAL CAMPUS: THE ICONIC CORE

CHARACTER
The 210 acre Central Campus is quintessentially UW in feel, with many clearly figured landscape spaces, as well as a complementary network of smaller, more intricate, courtyards and gardens. Similarly, the architecture is a heterogeneous but complementary collection of buildings containing a diverse mixture of academic, research, administrative, residential, recreational, and social uses. The Central Campus is the most outward-looking of all neighborhoods as well, including the highest points and best views on the campus.

FUNCTION
The Central Campus is what most people are referring to when they talk about campus, with Red Square at its heart. This is the point of origin for many entering UW for the first time, and for those returning to enjoy an iconic UW moment. This is also the neighborhood with the highest percentage of social use, highest overall population, and the most diverse mix of graduate, undergraduate, faculty, and staff. In general the landscape of the Central Campus is under pressure from levels of use and desire for further development.

STRATEGY
Although the Central Campus is very close to development capacity, there are many opportunities to better integrate and connect its component parts. For instance, the Central Campus should be the easiest place to get to from the other neighborhoods, and the easiest place to navigate within. Greater connectivity between the center and adjacent neighborhoods is a major focus of several CLF case studies. The pronounced topography of the Central Campus presents a challenge for universal access and connectivity in the landscape; a concerted effort should be made to improve this condition, particularly in relation to Red Square and other key locations.

Central Campus
Landscape/ Development Proportions:

Total Area: 210 acres
45% Planted Area: 95 acres
37% Paved Area: 75 acres
18% Building Footprint Area: 40 acres
A RICH & DIVERSE CAMPUS SETTING

Rainier Vista

Quad

Burke-Gilman Trail

Parrington Lawn
CHARACTER
The urban grid and city street life define the character of the West Campus. The 110 acre neighborhood includes multiple small and mid-sized structures but possesses few defining landscape moments, including the waterfront, which is difficult to see or visit. With the exception of Campus Parkway, the West Campus currently feels more like a part of the U District than a part of the University.

FUNCTION
The current function of the West Campus is largely residential, but also with academic and infrastructural program. Compared to the Central Campus, which is twice as big but much more completely used, the West Campus has great potential to increase its usefulness in supporting the University mission. It represents a largely untapped opportunity for the campus to develop a much more urban character, with the ability to accept relatively high degrees of development and change.

STRATEGY
Working with the West Campus Planning Team, the University should take greater advantage of contiguous land holdings in the West Campus to consolidate a sense of an urban campus here, creating a stronger context for existing landscape features such as the waterfront, the Burke Gilman Trail, and Campus Parkway. Development of this underutilized district should encourage a hybrid condition in the landscape that speaks to both the urban and campus character of this neighborhood. More intense use of the West Campus will reduce development pressure on the Central Campus.

West Campus
Landscape/Development Proportions:

Total Area: 110 acres
14% Planted Area: 15 acres
55% Paved Area: 60 acres
31% Building Footprint Area: 35 acres
CHARACTER
The large, densely spaced buildings of the Health Sciences and Medical Center Complex dominate the identity of the 70 acres of South Campus, creating an almost continuous edge between the Central Campus and Portage Bay. On the southernmost boundary, the Portage Bay waterfront is relatively open and moderately well connected, but access through the landscape and visual connections to the waterfront are obstructed by buildings. The band of medium-scale buildings and parking areas in between these two strong edges feels hidden away and poorly organized, with a fragmented landscape.

FUNCTION
The South Campus houses one of the biggest public services of the University – the Medical Center, as well as a strong concentration of research facilities related to Health Sciences, and classroom space. It is also the University’s primary waterfront laboratory, providing important access for research vessels. The landscape, with a few exceptions, does not have a strong positive program, but the potential of the waterfront as a major recreational amenity for the campus is significant.

STRATEGY
The South Campus would benefit from stronger at-grade and above-grade connections to the core campus. Additionally, stronger connections along the waterfront would make this neighborhood a campus-wide destination, reducing the sense of isolation caused by steep topography, the roadway, and large buildings. A focused reorganization of the architectural massing and the creation of a contiguous landscape with positive character and uses could raise the profile of this neighborhood and make it a fully integrated part of the wider campus.

South Campus
Landscape / Development Proportions:
Total Area: 70 acres
30% Planted Area: 20 acres
36% Paved Area: 25 acres
34% Building Footprint Area: 25 acres
Health Sciences Center

Portage Bay Vista

UW Waterfront

Salmon Homing Pond
CHARACTER
At 260 acres, the East Campus is the biggest individual neighborhood, and the least populated. From its Montlake Boulevard boundary, parking lots define the outward identity of the northern expanse of the East Campus. Moving toward the intersection at Pacific, athletic fields and structures become more prominent, and more densely arranged, culminating with Husky Stadium and its associated parking at the far south. The Union Bay Natural Area (UBNA), which is a major research and teaching facility, is very different in character from the other two areas, typified by wetland ecologies and unpaved pathways.

FUNCTION
Overall, the East Campus is the least well connected of the four major campus neighborhoods, and as a result it functions well below its potential. Three major areas serve three very different and relatively singular functions: athletics to the south, parking to the north, and nature to the east. The athletic area is well developed, with landscapes that serve the particular functions of sports and spectator facilities; the large parking lots are poorly defined and further exacerbate the disconnection of this part of campus; the UBNA is the most productive part of the campus in terms of ecosystem services.

STRATEGY
Dramatically improving connections to the rest of campus should be a priority for the East Campus. Following that, increasing the population and use of this neighborhood, particularly along Montlake Boulevard, would help to relieve development pressures in other campus neighborhoods. Introducing more academic or research program along the north boundary of the site would provide a stepping stone to the UBNA and Athletic programming.
A RICH & DIVERSE CAMPUS SETTING

- Union Bay Natural Area
- Husky Outdoor Track
- E1 Parking Lot
- Waterfront Activities Center
THE LANDSCAPE MOSAIC: THE VALUE AND STRENGTH IN THE CAMPUS SETTING
A DYNAMIC STRUCTURE
The overall character of the UW landscape is the product of the dynamic interaction between several large-scale landscape systems. Some of them are underlying physical realities, like the dramatic topography, drainage patterns, habitat range from ridge to waterfront, and views. Some of them are results of historic development patterns, the urban context, circulation, and infrastructural systems. The character is expressed in general terms at the neighborhood level, but the specific character of individual parts of the campus is expressed at a finer grain, as a diverse mosaic of landscape types. By understanding the interaction of the campus-wide systems with the individual mosaic pieces, a campus landscape framework can be developed, which has both a usefully high degree of specificity, and an understanding of the underlying mechanics of the campus landscape form.

THE LANDSCAPE MOSAIC
The UW campus landscape is a heterogeneous mosaic of landscape types. Each type, or piece of the mosaic, has a distinct character and function, ranging from the highly figured “Campus Green” spaces of Denny Yard and Rainier Vista to the “interstitial or buffer spaces” that are often forgotten, but are found in key locations throughout the campus. By identifying and describing each element of the mosaic, the Campus Landscape Framework (CLF) shows how all parts of the landscape work together to create a functioning whole. The reading of the campus as a mosaic celebrates the richness and diversity of landscape types, and resists the temptation to find campus-wide solutions to issues that demand more nuance. Each mosaic element should be addressed on its own terms, taking into account adjacent relationships, but making sure they are treated as having their own integrity. They should not be sub-divided into ever smaller pieces, as often happens when parts of a landscape are considered as components of a building development or other capital project.

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE AND PRESERVATION
The CLF identifies the value in the function and character of the mosaic pieces, highlighting pieces that have been degraded, are not functioning at their potential, or have never been developed in a positive way. Given the heterogenous nature of the campus, and the overall high quality of much of the landscape, it seems unlikely that deep structural changes would be beneficial, or even possible. However, there are key areas where strategic change on a relatively modest scale could trigger positive developments across a number of landscape components (identity, wayfinding, ecology, access, entry, sense of history and place, etc.). As the campus evolves, it is important to defend the diversity of landscape experience and communicate the contributions of each type of landscape. For instance, the woodland has been a defining feature of the campus since its inception, but its role in the landscape mosaic is threatened as these areas become thin margins rather than robust frames.
CHARACTER
Campus greens are clearly figured landscapes, and amongst the most well known parts of the campus. They are often bounded by architecture or by woodland plantings, as in the case of Rainier Vista, and have either open lawns or lawn beneath a shading canopy, providing space for studying, casual sports, and informal gatherings. This type of open space is highly valued in an urban setting, so campus greens frequently take on the role of parks in an underserved neighborhood like the UDistrict. The primary spatial relationship of a campus green is between the ground level and the canopy level, so these spaces do not usually have beds or shrubs, except at building edges.

Examples include: The Quad; Denny Yard; Parrington Lawn; Portage Bay Vista; Fish Sciences; HUB Lawn

In some locations, this landscape type paired with the campus topography creates magnificent vistas. Examples include: Rainier Vista; Portage Bay Vista; Olympic Vista

FUNCTION
Open greens are a very important type of multifunctional landscape and engender a feeling of community through their openness and bounded figuration, and the UW is fortunate to have so many fine examples in central campus. Lawns are used for studying, casual sports and informal gatherings. They serve also to communicate the timeless qualities of the UW campus.

STRATEGY
The campus greens of Central Campus should be preserved and protected, with improvements needed to their accessibility and, in some cases, relationships to adjacent spaces. They should have a greater presence in South Campus and West Campus, where there is high development density but not much open green space.
INFORMAL GREEN

CHARACTER
Informal Greens are open, unfigured lawn areas, usually found at the campus periphery, and feel less planned and welcoming, even though they share many spatial characteristics with Campus Greens. The examples that currently exist on the UW campus include remnant areas of the former UW golf course that now provide important access to the water’s edge. As contributors to the campus landscape, these spaces are vulnerable to change because they are unresolved with respect to program and use.

Examples include:
East of Montlake Bridge to Waterfront Activities Center
West of Montlake Bridge to University Hospital

FUNCTION
As the campus grows in density and as the bulk of new buildings increases through height and footprint, the landscape needs to be considered with increasing care. Informal greens represent a relatively low utilization of a landscape, which is not a problem when there is abundant land, but becomes increasingly less suitable as all campus neighborhoods become increasingly dense.

STRATEGY
Informal greens do not demand immediate action, but the opportunity to improve their performance as landscapes should inform the way planning decisions are made. The green along the Montlake Cut, in particular, is of a size and at a location where it could easily become a much more popular recreational asset for the University if the access problems could be solved. Smaller greens in other parts of campus could be improved to accommodate program and to feel less like interstitial spaces.

TOTAL: 15.11 Acres
AVERAGE: 1.16 Acres
RECREATIONAL FIELDS

CHARACTER
Either taking advantage of a relatively flat area, or building one from existing topography, recreational fields are large landscape spaces with very high recreational and social value but little to no ecological value. Many of these have architectural infrastructure for spectators and support that make them an obstacle to campus connectivity.

Examples include: Intermural Fields; ICA Fields; Archery Range, Denny Field

FUNCTION
Opportunities for athletics are an important part of the college experience, whether students are on a UW team or playing recreationally. The proximity of the fields to central campus, or good connectivity, is important to making athletics an integrated part of daily life rather than too much of a specialized activity.

STRATEGY
The current concentration of sports fields in East Campus makes relatively good sense given the flatness of the terrain, despite the high incidence of differential settling due to the capped landfill. However, given the pressures that other campus neighborhoods are facing, the desire to expand the number of large sports fields in this area might need to be weighed against the needs of other types of campus programs, such as academics and research. Maintaining and enhancing good connectivity between the fields to allow access to the waterfront, and providing accessible routes between central campus and the fields, will be key as this area of east campus continues to change and develop.
COURTYARD/TERRACE

CHARACTER
Courtyards and terraces are relatively small, intimate spaces associated with individual buildings. These are frequently, but not always, part of the entry sequence into a building, and are designed to feel slightly separate from campus circulation, with a gardenesque individuality and intricacy. Several of these provide outdoor building program for studying or departmental events.

Examples include: Arts Building Courtyard; McKenzie Courtyard; Bloedel Courtyard; many examples at Health Sciences

FUNCTION
Courtyards are as quintessentially collegiate as open greens, which could be partially attributed to tradition, but is more likely an indication that these kinds of landscapes are important to academic learning and research. Courtyards are used for viewing into, walking across, and being in, and can be shared by many people doing these same things simultaneously.

STRATEGY
As greater demands are placed on buildings to provide certain types of academic and research programs, efforts should still be made to create smaller outdoor spaces specific to each building that overlap with the campus landscape in meaningful ways. As these types of landscapes are developed, care should be taken to create environments that can be maintained within the resources of the UW Grounds Department.
CHARACTER
Plazas are large-scale figured spaces, usually defined by surrounding buildings. Typically, plazas are mostly paved, and allow free circulation across them rather than through defined pathways. Most of the uses that take place in a plaza do not preclude trees, but they are generally open to the sky, with relatively little shade. Ideally, a plaza will have enough complexity of experience to feel welcoming and engaging even when just a few people are there, and will be designed to be a comfortable place to be at different times of the year.

Example includes: Red Square; Drumheller Fountain; Hec Ed Plaza

FUNCTION
Plazas can host civic gatherings, festivals, and fairs, and they can be important spaces for temporary installations or uses, such as the food trucks in Red Square. Plazas can also provide a sense of openness and breadth as a relief from architectural density, such as the Frosh Pond Plaza. They are relatively robust as a landscape type and can withstand high levels of use year-round.

STRATEGY
While there is no need to create more big plazas on the order of Red Square, the creation of smaller plazas, which provide seating and shade and places to gather, will continue to be important as the campus expands. For instance, plazas will be one potential means of creating a sense of welcome and spatial generosity in West Campus without impinging on the vibrant urban character that is being developed in that neighborhood.
WOODLAND GROVE

CHARACTER
The woodland grove is the immediately recognizable Pacific Northwest frame for the university, with a mixture of tall evergreens and deciduous trees and a robust canopy. In order to convey the sense of a woodland grove on an active urban campus, the planting should be thick enough to feel enclosing, providing a sense of place with each season of the year. The continuity of the woodland grove around three sides of central campus is key to the campus character.

Examples include: Stevens Way, in the vicinity of the bus shelter/greenhouses; all along Burke Gilman Trail; Island Grove; Burke Museum Frontage; Law School Frontage; North 45th Street Corridor; Kincaid Ravine

FUNCTION
The woodland grove provides respite from the more developed parts of campus, as well as important ecosystem services. Although there were deep stands of trees on campus through the middle of the 20th century, the current woodland grove is a relatively narrow ribbon of green foreground that frames views into the university, and a protective edge for many of the spaces within. The woodland also runs along the former rail corridor and so defines the cool, shady experience of the Burke Gilman trail, decisively differentiating it from the traffic corridors below.

STRATEGY
The UW’s woodland groves have been eroded, but what remains is sufficiently important to merit active preservation and enhancement. The greatest concentration of woodland is along the northern boundary of the core campus, starting with the Kincaid Ravine and moving along to the NW corner of the campus. This northern woodland corridor should be rejuvenated as part of the upcoming projects in this area. Similarly, preserving and strengthening the wooded edge that runs along the Burke Gilman needs to be given high priority as plans are developed to improve the trail and to build along it.
INTERSTITIAL/BUFFER SPACE

CHARACTER
As the name suggests, interstitial spaces and buffer spaces are not intentional landscapes, but are largely defined by adjacent uses. In many cases, however, this does not prevent them from being beautiful or interesting. Interstitial spaces sometimes provide important connections between destinations, including insiders’ shortcuts. Interstitial spaces are typically small in size, fragmented, and scattered across all parts of campus.

Examples include: the sidewalks in front of E1 parking; the space under the University Bridge

FUNCTION
Interstital spaces are, by nature, without a specific function. Depending on their size and context, they can be used in a variety of ways, but they may also simply be residual spaces without a clear function or character. Buffer spaces, by contrast, may be playing a role in blocking an unsightly condition from view or softening the effect of a piece of architecture or infrastructure.

STRATEGY
Buffer spaces and interstitial spaces are not necessarily bad, and can sometimes create unintentional conditions that are positive in nature. Nonetheless, the utilization of the campus and its landscape is so high in parts that it is preferable to avoid the creation of new spaces that are limited in experiential or functional value.

TOTAL: 25.10 Acres
AVERAGE: 0.36 Acres
THRESHOLD

CHARACTER

Moving past the outer boundaries of the UW campus, the campus is experienced both sequentially and continuously, as a series of spaces and as a route through these spaces. Within this sense of continuity, thresholds are landscapes whose primary purpose is to provide a transition into or between important moments on the campus and as such have a significant role to play in the experience of those more iconic spaces.

Examples include: Multiple Red Square Thresholds; Entrance to Fine Arts Quad

FUNCTION

Thresholds provide breathing room between the experience of different moments on the campus. In some cases, the need for thresholds is determined by the size of the spaces and the size of the architecture. Thresholds can feel like small courtyards or plazas in their own right, but their primary role is to create a sense of anticipation and a clear means of moving from one space to the next.

STRATEGY

Thresholds are sometimes an indication of the importance of the connection being made. Places on campus where it might be appropriate to enhance this sense of a guided transition from one place to another include many of the entries along 15th Ave NE, as well as between Health Sciences and the campus waterfront. Many thresholds on campus are not universally accessible, so a focus on fixing these impediments to connection should be a priority of the CLF.
PASSAGE

CHARACTER
Passages are spaces whose primary purpose is to provide a direct route between destinations. At a minimum, these spaces should be accessible, but it is preferable if they are also memorable and enjoyable.

Examples include: Memorial Way; Klickitat Lane; Skamania Lane; Whitman Court

FUNCTION
The UW has a number of high-profile passages that provide access from the center of campus to the periphery, the most significant of these being Memorial Way. The breaks in these passages, particularly in the vicinity of Red Square, are sometimes an indication of a lack of adequate continuity at the core of the campus experience. Some shorter passages, such as Kincaid Lane, create enjoyable environments and provide a sense of transition from one place to another. Other passages are more functional in nature, without a high experiential value.

STRATEGY
Many of the passages on campus, both major and minor, are poorly connected, or resolved at their ends. It is a lost opportunity to allow passages, such as Memorial Way and Campus Parkway, to dead-end as they approach Red Square. A greater sense of continuity could be achieved by targeting a few, admittedly challenging, obstructions, as well as fixing breaks in accessible routes across campus.
URBAN FRONTAGE

CHARACTER
Urban frontage is a varied condition on the UW Campus. In some cases, it can be a vibrant and exciting territory between campus architecture and adjacent urban street, or it can be a relatively banal and inhospitable sidewalk between a roadway and a campus building.

Examples include: 15th Ave NE, Pacific Ave NE

FUNCTION
The most exciting and enjoyable urban frontages achieve the concentration of landscape functions such as orientation, passage, shade, wayfinding, seating, and identity within the relatively narrow space between building and street. In the least engaging urban frontages, function is reduced to passage along a sidewalk.

STRATEGY
Urban frontage should always be treated as an opportunity to integrate the life of the university with the life of the city, a condition that is particularly important in the west campus, where a series of excellent urban frontages have recently been created. Landscape elements, such as street trees, benches, signage and bike racks, should be coordinated with street level architecture to convey a sense of welcome. One notable area where this is not currently happening at the UW is along Pacific Street, which is an environment that is relatively inhospitable to pedestrians.
CHARACTER
The UW is lucky to have a handful of small-scaled, comfortable, inward-looking, lushly planted gardens. For the amount of space they occupy, gardens give back many fold in psychological refreshment.

Examples: Sylvan Grove; Grieg Garden; Medicinal Herb Garden

FUNCTION
People experience gardens in very personal ways, and there are various reasons students, faculty, and staff might want to visit a garden occasionally, or on a daily basis. Precisely because they are not tied to major circulation routes or building entrances, the UW’s small gardens offer a moment of separation from the pace of campus life, a hugely important role that these small, special landscapes can play very effectively.

STRATEGY
Gardens are an intensification of the landscape experience. In the future, the typical campus garden landscape might need to become more robustly planted and experientially rich in order to maintain a strong landscape presence in the context of increasingly bulky campus architecture. Care should be taken in the development of new gardens to simplify maintenance and management considerations, and to create rich habitat where possible.
SERVICE AND PARKING

CHARACTER
Service spaces have been designed to accommodate the needs of cars and trucks for service and loading, as well as places to leave cars and continue on foot.

Examples Include: Skagit Lane; E-1 Parking

FUNCTION
At one time, the UW accommodated car access and parking throughout the central campus, even within some of the most iconic landscape spaces, such as Rainier Vista. As more and more routes became pedestrianized, maintaining service access to each building meant coordinating access with Stevens Way, the major service roadway. Similarly, some parking was consolidated into structures and some moved to the periphery, but with care to preserve accessible parking throughout the central campus.

STRATEGY
The service needs of the University should be met in an integrated fashion where the overall experience of the campus is considered alongside functional requirements. In places where service tends to preclude other types of use, such as the service corridor that is interior to South Campus, new planning and design work should attempt to create the context for other types of use. The continuing trend toward elimination of surface parking in favor of structured parking is generally a positive development for the landscape and should continue. In general, the campus should work towards integrating service and parking areas with the rest of the campus landscape.
LAKE EDGE WETLAND

CHARACTER
The Lake Edge Wetlands are UW lands that are too wet to be occupiable, but support rich environments and habitat. The sole example of this mosaic type is the generally unstructured shoreline of the Union Bay Natural Area, which follows the extreme eastern edge of east campus.

FUNCTION
The Lake Edge Wetland is one of the unique environments at the UW that is environmentally and experientially rich. Though it cannot be walked upon, it can be walked past, or canoed through. Given its prior history as a created shoreline, through the lowering of Lake Washington, and then a municipal landfill, the Lake Edge Wetland also has high research and teaching value, which is currently undertaken through the Center for Urban Horticulture, part of the UW Botanic Gardens.

STRATEGY
Much of the treatment of the wetland itself is guided by state environmental regulations. Nevertheless, the continuity of access to visit and view the lake edge wetland should be improved without disturbing its ecological functions.
MEADOW

CHARACTER
The UW’s meadows are large swaths of unmown grasses and plants that allow for circulation on mown or structured pathways. Connected to the Lake Edge Wetland, meadows are part of the Union Bay Natural Area. The vast expanse of this system makes it a very visible part of the University’s natural habitat, which can be seen from the eastern slope of central campus, and also from the lake and 520 bridge.

FUNCTION
The meadows cover the former municipal landfill that dominated much of the site up through the 1960s. They provide important habitat, especially for birds, in an otherwise urbanized setting. As with the Lake Edge Wetlands, the meadows have high value as a teaching tool as well as offering a very different type of landscape experience in comparison to the lawns and woodlands of the central campus.

STRATEGY
The meadows are not considered suitable for building due to the unstable subsurface created by multiple layers of landfill and debris on top of compressible peat. The visibility of the meadows from the campus is, however, at risk from the continued expansion of athletic program. Access to this area, including wayfinding and signage, should be improved to increase general knowledge about its potential as a site for recreation, research, and teaching.
CONSTRUCTED WATERFRONT

CHARACTER
The constructed waterfront includes structured waterfront access, frequently with concrete edges. This type of landscape is usually low in ecological diversity, but high in other types of value such as recreation, passage, research, and moorings.

Examples include: Montlake Cut; Waterfront Activities Center; Health Sciences Waterfront; Salmon Homing Pond

FUNCTION
The constructed waterfront provides opportunities to be very close to the water’s edge, though it also creates an elevational separation between shoreline and water surface. In addition to providing the navigational width that is necessary for ship traffic between Portage Bay and Union Bay, the UW’s constructed edge provides access for boat use and spaces for research vessels to be moored.

STRATEGY
As with the Lake Edge Wetlands, any changes to the constructed waterfront are guided by state regulations related to shoreline management and federal regulations related to navigability. Also similar is the need to create better access to the constructed waterfront from other parts of campus, as well as creating a continuous waterfront trail that unites the experience of the UW’s constructed and naturalized waterfronts.
HOW TO PRESERVE WHAT’S BEST AND ADAPT MOSAIC TYPES
The landscape mosaic contains many valuable conditions that are worth protecting, but it is not a static end state. Along with efforts to preserve the general diversity of landscape types at the UW, it is important to keep an open-minded attitude toward change. Working with the ongoing growth of the university and the transformation of its urban context, the range of landscape types present, and their arrangement, will and should continue to evolve with the campus over time. The landscape changes suggested in CLF project work within the mosaic of types, in many cases using a major new landscape use to catalyze the evolution of a new neighborhood, in others simply recommending an enhancement of the existing landscape type.
CASE STUDIES: TESTING CAMPUS SETTING STRATEGIES AT A PROJECT SCALE

Red Square and Thresholds
Stevens Way Reorganization
N22 Parking Lot
Denny Field and North Campus Housing
Olympic Vista
Portage Bay Connection
Montlake Cut Connection
Lake Washington Connection
Union Bay Natural Area Connection
Burke Museum and 43rd Street Entrance
Parrington Lawn
Asotin Place and NE Grant Lane
University Bridge Landing
West Campus Streetscape
Burke Gilman Trail Stormwater
Based on the core principle that all proposed changes need to be evaluated both for their effect on individual mosaic pieces and on the functioning of campus-wide systems, all of the case studies contribute in some way to a comprehensive strategy for improving the richness and diversity of the campus setting. This larger effort can also be broken down into a subset of more specific strategies that relate to several different case studies.

There are opportunities for the UW to harness the ongoing evolution of campus as a means to preserve and strengthen the mosaic of all the campus neighborhoods. Looked at together, the case studies reveal broader strategies for improving the campus. These include: reinforce the historic core, improve core to edge connectivity, transform 15th Ave NE from an edge to a connector, and green the West Campus circulation network.
REINFORCING THE HISTORIC CAMPUS CORE
Great care should be taken to protect landscape integrity when developing the last few sites available in Central Campus. Case study improvements to the historic campus core will strengthen the landscape context for the University’s most cherished spaces, allowing them to continue to speak to the timelessness of the university while also contributing to its future. At the same time, as discussed earlier in this chapter, rethinking unsung spaces, such as interstitial spaces and service spaces, or experimenting with the plant palette, can also be strategies that contribute to the character of the campus core.

Case studies that support this strategy include:
1. Red Square and Thresholds
2. Stevens Way Reorganization
3. N22 Parking Lot
4. Denny Field and North Campus Housing

IMPROVING CAMPUS CORE TO EDGE CONNECTIVITY
Improved connectivity is a key part of strengthening the landscape mosaic in the three peripheral neighborhoods, so they can better approach the caliber of Central Campus. Many members of the campus community go across neighborhood boundaries on a daily basis. The campus can better support this core campus activity by improving the character of core to edge connectivity in strategic locations. This can include enlarging or improving the actual crossings, as well as modifying the routes that lead to these vital connections. This effort to improve connectivity, despite obvious challenges related to grade change and traffic arterials, will open up a two-way conduit between neighborhood uses, improving connectivity throughout, and expanding the sense of landscape excellence to the very edges of campus.

Case studies that support this strategy include:
5. Olympic Vista
6. Portage Bay Connections
7. Montlake Cut Connection
8. Lake Washington Connection
9. Union Bay Natural Area Connection
TRANSFORMING 15TH AVENUE FROM AN EDGE TO A CONNECTOR

Within the realm of campus connections, the 15th Ave NE boundary between Central and West Campus is unique in that there is a relatively manageable grade difference and important program on both sides. The experience of the UW as an urban campus will be improved by strategically eroding the concrete wall along 15th Ave NE, diversifying the edge experience along 15th, and opening up the possibility of multiple welcoming connections.

Case studies that support this strategy include:
10. Burke Museum and 43rd Street Entrance
11. Parrington Lawn
12. Asotin Place and NE Grant Lane

WEST CAMPUS GREEN NETWORK

Although West Campus will be more urban in nature than the other campus neighborhoods, it should present a robust landscape setting that reflects the unique role of campus land in a city and the overall identity of the UW. This could include provisions for new green spaces within West Campus as well as comprehensive improvements to street design as new parts of the neighborhood are developed.

Case studies that support this strategy include:
13. University Bridge Landing
14. West Campus Streetscape