

Section Five: Area Plan



Key Determinants

The East Campus Entrance Area Plan builds on the extensive visioning and planning efforts already embraced by UCR, and seeks to support the University's guiding principles through the continuing development of the built environment. In keeping with this effort, the Area Plan reflects the following key pursuits at UCR:

Improving the University/Town Connection

As the UCR campus develops, a key focus will be the University's evolving relationship with the surrounding community including its public entities, private businesses and residential neighborhoods. It will become increasingly important to establish both clear campus boundaries and a strong sense of University identity, while at the same time reaching out to build connections with the surrounding community and the downtown area. Planning efforts must recognize that these "University/Town" relationships offer a variety of opportunities for creating shared resources, facilities and programs. Continuing development scenarios need to explore both buildings and outdoor gathering spaces designed to capitalize on these opportunities. In addition, special attention to issues of access and connection, both physical and perceived, will be required.



Environmental Stewardship

The University has committed to an ongoing responsibility to lead the way as a regional model for environmental stewardship, through the preservation, enhancement and restoration of the natural environment. Continued planning efforts must not only recognize existing environmental patterns, but also enhance and capitalize on these elements as unique campus assets. Preservation of viewsheds, protection of drainage patterns, and enhancement of native plant communities can all contribute to the creation of a truly unique campus identity for both the Entrance Area and the larger University campus.



World Leadership in Selected Areas

The 2010 Vision for UCR identified world leadership in selected fields of study/research, including Materials Science, Nanotechnology, and Genomics, as a critical focus in the continuing development of the University. In order to meet this goal, campus planning must ensure an adequate land base for the development of cutting edge teaching and research facilities. In addition, plans must establish strong building adjacencies that enhance interaction and collaboration between the students, faculty and staff engaged within these programs.

Support of the Draft 2003 LRDP Strategies

Continued planning efforts must also respond to the draft 2003 LRDP as the primary long-range planning document for the University of California, Riverside. Efforts must support stated LRDP strategies including those related to projected campus growth, transportation, openspace requirements and land use development. As articulated in the LRDP, plans must recognize the need to efficiently utilize the campus land base, ensuring that available land will be capable of supporting continued growth for many years to come. Higher density development is critical in implementing the LRDP circulation and parking strategies, as it supports a pedestrian oriented campus, and encourages the campus community to use alternative transportation or to park in perimeter parking structures and walk to their destination. In addition, planning efforts must respond to the long-term goal of generating activity along University Avenue, promoting a lively streetscape capable of strengthening the pedestrian connection between East and West Campus, and between UCR and the City of Riverside.

Area Plan Concept

Guided by the University's key pursuits, the East Campus Entrance Area Study (ECEAS) reinforces a clear campus identity and creates positive connections to the city through an enhanced campus approach sequence. Parking structures located at the campus perimeter provide convenient access to the campus core while promoting a pedestrian environment. An array of arts-related venues welcome visitors, creating a place at the heart of the study area that fosters campus-community interaction. The ECEAS further reinforces the key visions of the University by respecting the unique natural characteristics found within this area of the campus, while simultaneously creating a series of development sites necessary to provide a sense of campus pride and civic vitality to UC, Riverside.

Long viewed as the "front door" for visitors to UCR, the campus approach from downtown Riverside traveling east along University Avenue is enhanced in the ECEAS through the placement of signage, entry monuments, street furnishings and plantings. These improvements not only clarify wayfinding, but also contribute to a sense of entry into the unique place that is the UCR campus. The repetition and patterning of street tree planting and architectural elements creates a sense of continuity and highlights decision-making points as visitors move from Iowa Avenue along University Avenue toward the campus core. A roundabout at the east end of University Avenue serves as a ceremonial terminus for the approach, providing a visual focal point before the road swings north, continuing as Canyon Crest Drive. The ECEAS repeats these street improvements along Canyon Crest Drive, providing visitors entering from Blaine Avenue and traveling south along Canyon Crest Drive with the same level of wayfinding clarity, continuity and sense of place.

The enhanced campus approach brings students, faculty, staff, and visitors alike to the central plaza surrounded by an array of arts-based venues. Placed at the heart of the ECEAS, this central Arts Plaza serves as a welcome mat for the university and capitalizes on the adjacent art venues and programs to create a space that emphasizes campus-community interaction. In its position at a crossroads on campus, the generous plaza accommodates the overspill of visitors attending evening performances, large-scale campus community gatherings, and small outdoor study groups, as well as the buzzing movement of daily student life.

Looking east over the Arts Plaza toward the Box Springs Mountains, visitors see glimpses of the powerful arroyo system that drains the range beyond. Towering vegetation marks the arroyo as it tracks down the mountains toward the UCR campus at Valencia Hill Drive, where the University Arroyo first manifests itself as an above-ground directed channel with native vegetation. The ECEAS respects this strong natural feature by creating an open space framework to organize future development and protect the drainage pattern. The ECEAS echoes this natural feature in both the placement of buildings and the emphasis on a naturalized planting scheme reflective of the original wild character of the arroyo. As the existing arroyo emerges west of Canyon Crest Drive, buildings are located along its perimeter, protecting the integrity of the naturalized channel while capitalizing on its unique visual character as a southern Californian riparian system.

The East Campus Entrance Area Study serves as a benchmark in time. The plan captures the current values of the campus community in its articulation of identity, promotion of campus-community interaction, and emphasis on environmental respect and stewardship. Just as the plan reflects the vision of the current community, it must also serve as a long-range

planning tool and as such, it will be required to accommodate future changes both internally and in relation to surrounding conditions. With this in mind, the Area Plan provides a flexible hierarchy of spaces and building massing capable of adjusting to future programmatic changes and a strong open space framework to guide future campus growth as it occurs.



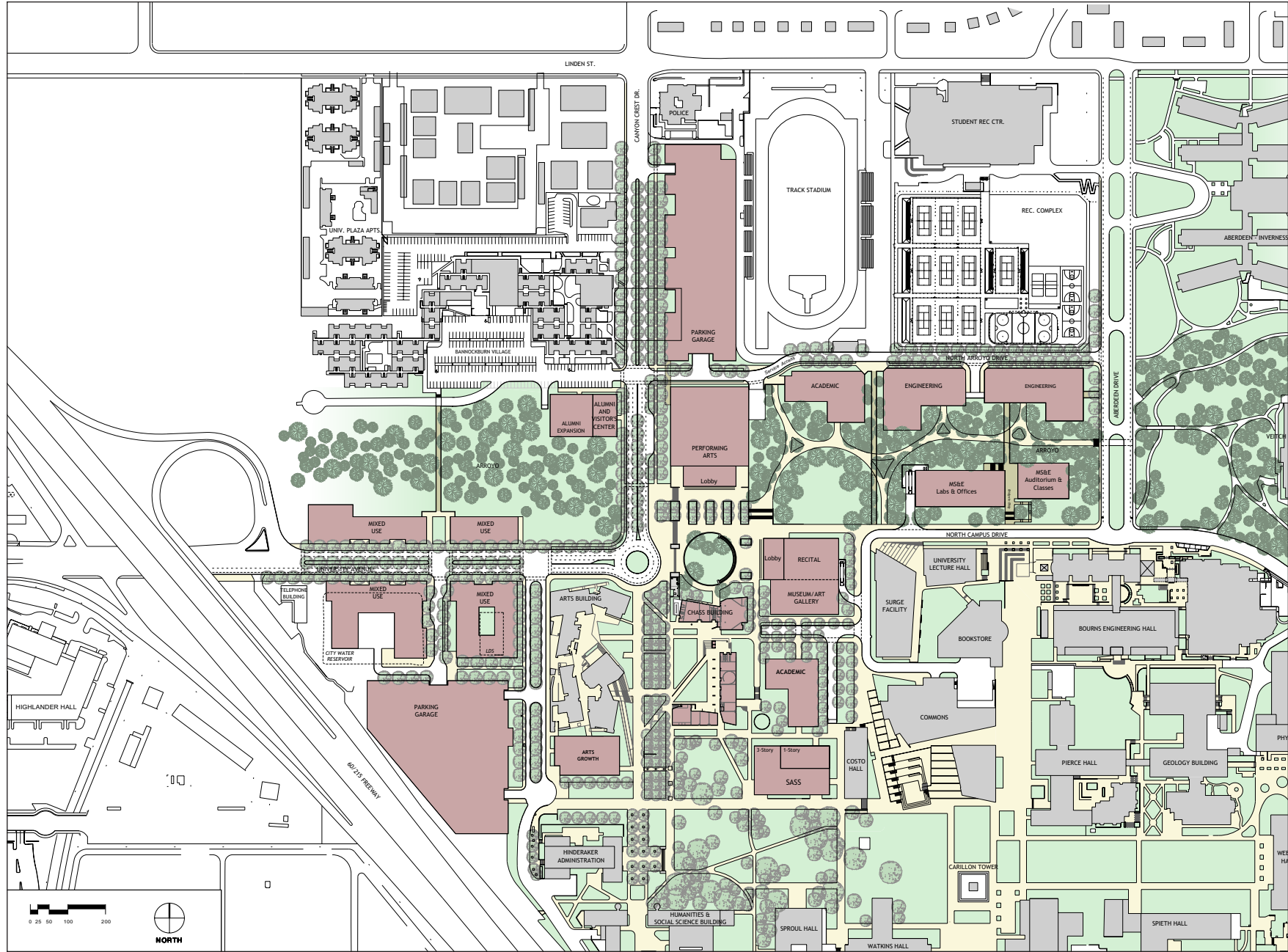


Figure 5.1: East Campus Entrance Area Plan Concept

A Walk Through the Future

Two students finish their cappuccinos at the Arroyo Café, checking their watches to see how much time they have to get across East Campus to their class at the Materials Science and Engineering Building. The two met an hour earlier to discuss their upcoming term paper. Javier had walked across the footbridge from his apartment at Bannockburn Village, stopping briefly to check on the progress of the new Alumni and Visitors' Center. The Center had outgrown their space in the old Watkins House and a new wing was being built, funded by an alumnus who had studied biotechnology. As Javier ambled through the treetops of the wild arroyo, he had spotted a ruby-crowned kinglet stopping by to rest in the lush trees on its migratory path southwards.

Javier's friend, Lavinia had come along University Avenue, under I-215, from her apartment near The Grove on West Campus. She normally liked to wander through the gardens along the old Gage Canal on her way to class, but she was running late this morning so she had hopped on the Highlander Hauler. The brightly painted trolley bus dropped her off in front of the apartment building recently completed by a local church, which housed students and church elders above a ground-floor chapel and bookstore.

Lavinia and Javier like to meet at the Arroyo Café because it's convenient for them both, and the rear terrace looks out onto a quiet creek weaving through a jumble of trees and shrubs, alive with birdsong. As they cross the tree-lined University Avenue after their coffee, the two stroll along wide sidewalks in front of the Arts Building, and continue towards the Arts Plaza beyond. Cars circle slowly through the Roundabout, heading towards the Parking Structure on Canyon Crest Drive. Campus gardeners carefully replant the seasonal floral display in the middle of the roundabout and adjust the sculptural installation created by UCR Fine Arts students to mark the school's 75th anniversary as a University.

As they hurry across the Arts Plaza, they bump into their friend Susan, who is rushing from dance practice in the Recital Hall to her Native American studies seminar in the nearby CHASS Instruction and Research Building. Exchanging a quick hug, they make plans to meet for lunch in the Commons – Lavinia has an appointment with an advisor next door in the SASS building at 1:30 to discuss her graduate school plans, so that suits her just fine. Javier might head to the Phys. Ed. Building to work out after lunch.

Passing in front of the soaring glass lobby of the Cordova Museum and Recital Hall, Javier and Lavinia stop suddenly, as they spot the huge orange

crane in front of the Performing Arts Center. Beneath it is suspended a large banner, proclaiming the upcoming shows by the Chinese National Opera, which, observes Javier, is a huge coup for UCR – this is their only show in California and they chose Riverside for the world class quality of the Watkins Concert Hall, with its soaring fly-loft and ease of access for delivery of the innumerable sets and instruments associated with such a large traveling production.

Hearing the Carillon Tower chime the hour, Javier and Lavinia dart down the stairway into Arroyo Gardens, the wide green space framed by the Performing Arts Center and Engineering complex. This is their favorite space to gather with friends for picnics or impromptu football games, or simply to study between classes under large trees. Some drama students practice a swordfight on the Arts Lawn, watched by others on the pedestrian bridge above that leads to the tennis courts and Student Athletic Center. This bridge is a popular shortcut onto campus for commuter students using the parking structure at Lot 24.

Cutting across the Arroyo Gardens at a jog, Javier and Lavinia sprint up the stairs to the MS&E Building, dashing into the Auditorium just in time to get two seats together, as the lights dim, and the professor begins to speak.

