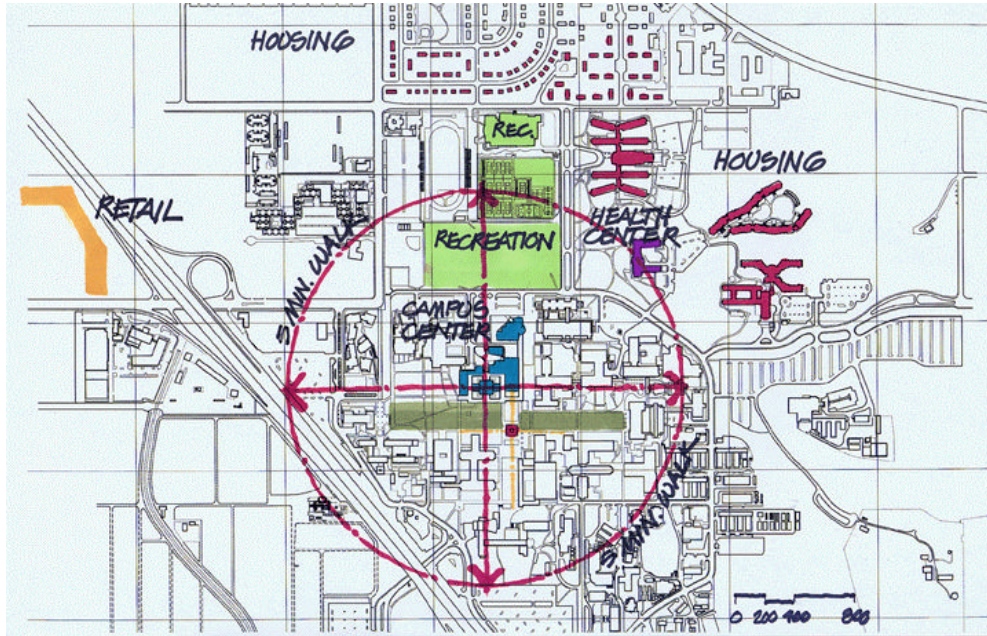


4.0 SITE ANALYSIS

Context

The existing Campus Commons is located at the center of the campus at the midpoint of the major east-west mall, and directly north of the carillon tower. This location is within a 5 minute walk (1/4 mile) of most academic buildings, and on the path between housing to the north and academic facilities to the south. The existing campus center complex of buildings includes the Commons of approximately 56,700 ASF in four buildings, and an adjacent campus bookstore of 25,000 ASF.



As UCR grows, with the potential to nearly double the student population within 10-15 years, the significance of buildings at the center grows. The Commons is one of the types of buildings that is well suited to the common, or community nature of the center.

The existing site is situated at the “crossroads” of the campus: it is the intersection of significant north-south and east-west campus pedestrian circulation, and opposite the carillon tower that serves as the symbolic center of the campus. The central portion of existing campus has three major types of large open space: the “formal” mall, which would benefit from a strengthening of its character, the recreation fields to the north, and the natural landscape to the northeast, a remnant of a natural arroyo running east west. Development of the Commons site must be sensitive to the formal open space to the south, the carillon as a campus focal point, and the more developed north-south pedestrian spine.

To the north, the soon-to-open Campus Surge Building will add significant pedestrian travel to and from the northwest side of the site.

The current UCR Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) is undergoing a 10 year update. The proposed development of the commons site should, at least, reinforce the two major open spaces identified in the existing LRDP that border the site to the south and east.



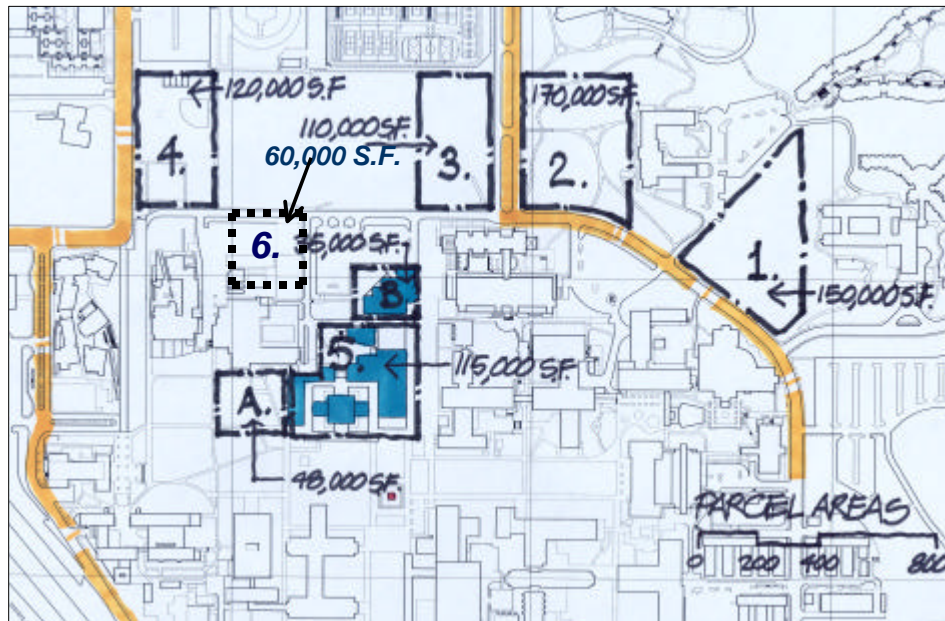
Existing Commons from the South

Alternative Parcels

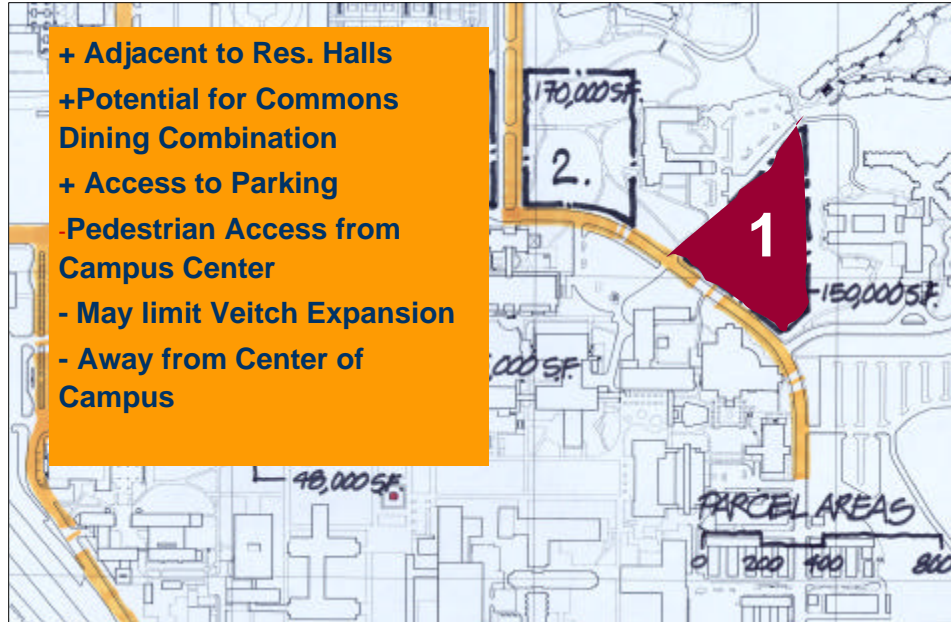


As part of the feasibility study for the expansion of the Commons, the existing site was examined for its potential to accommodate expansion, and other sites were reviewed to determine if there was a better strategic or functional location for the campus center. Five “parcels” in addition to the campus center site were reviewed for their potential to accommodate a campus center with a total area of 150-200,000 GSF. Each of the sites was determined to be large enough to accommodate the proposed program, but each had significant limitations when compared to the existing commons site.

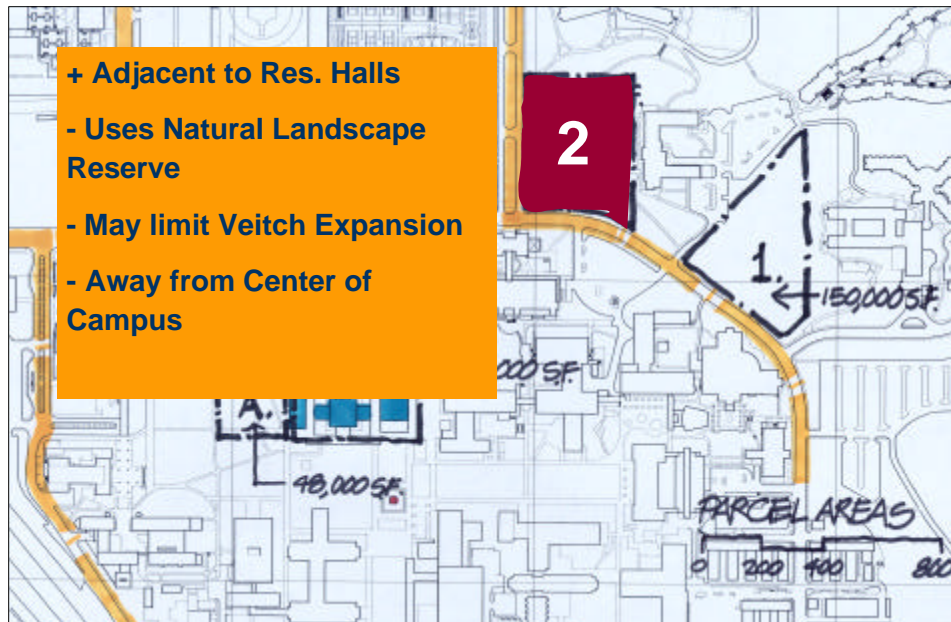
Parcel Areas



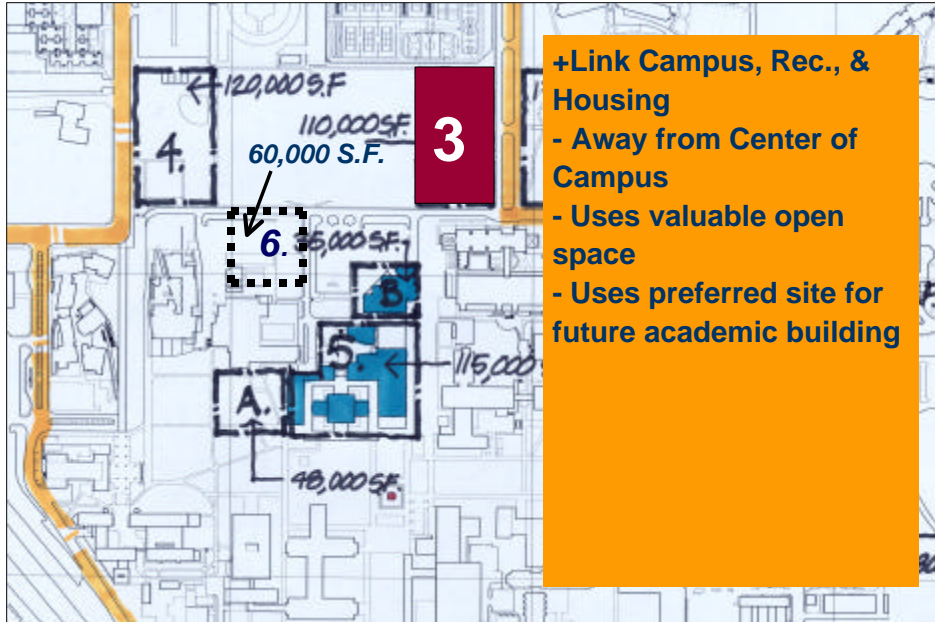
Parcel 1



Parcel 2

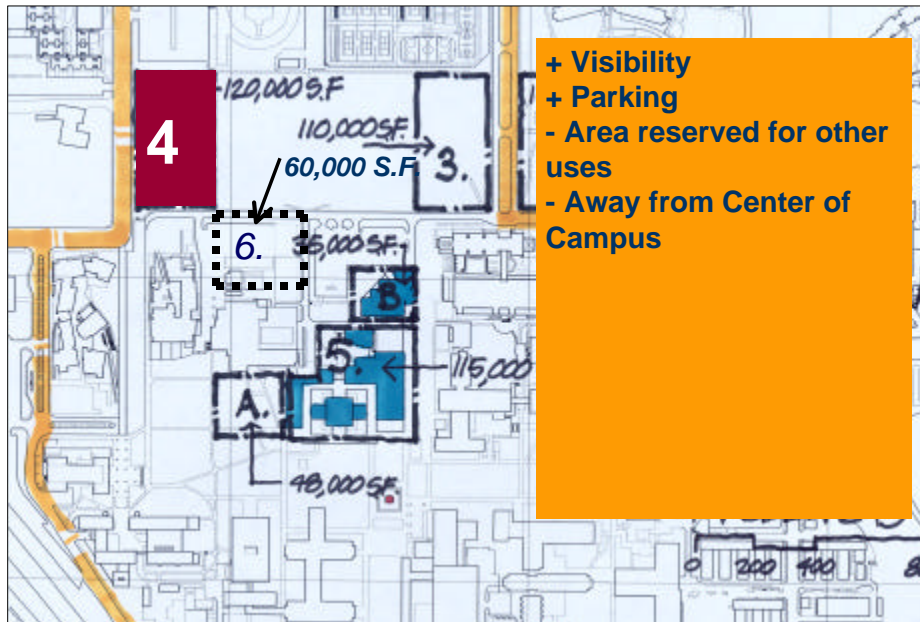


Parcel 3



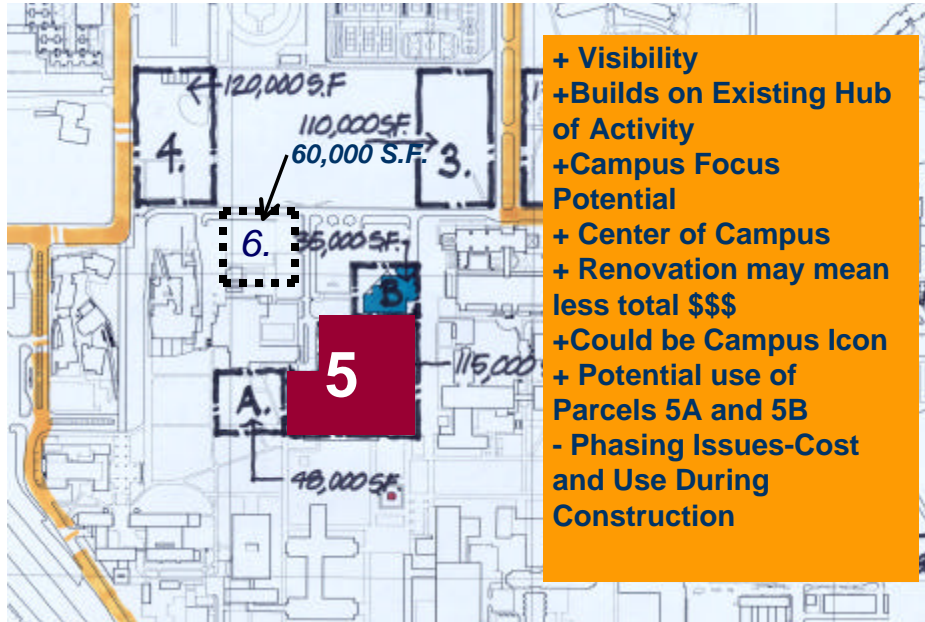
- +Link Campus, Rec., & Housing
- Away from Center of Campus
- Uses valuable open space
- Uses preferred site for future academic building

Parcel 4



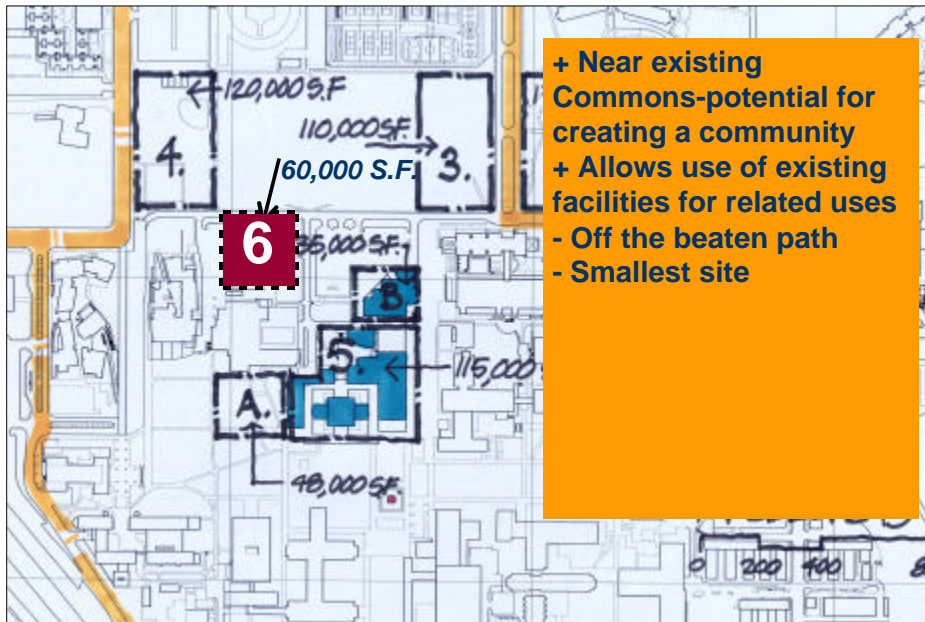
- + Visibility
- + Parking
- Area reserved for other uses
- Away from Center of Campus

Parcel 5



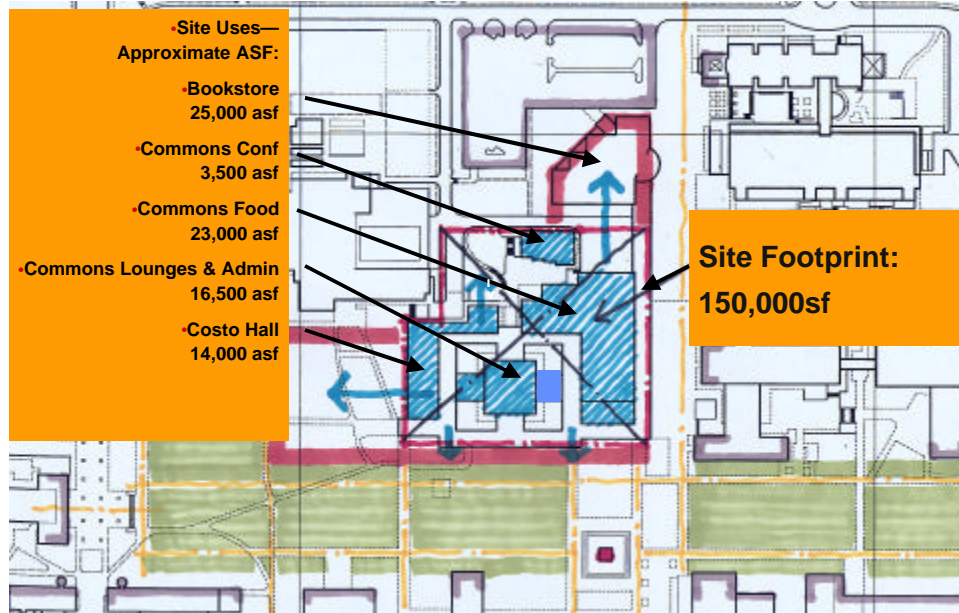
- + Visibility
- + Builds on Existing Hub of Activity
- + Campus Focus Potential
- + Center of Campus
- + Renovation may mean less total \$\$\$
- + Could be Campus Icon
- + Potential use of Parcels 5A and 5B
- Phasing Issues-Cost and Use During Construction

Parcel 6



- + Near existing Commons-potential for creating a community
- + Allows use of existing facilities for related uses
- Off the beaten path
- Smallest site

Existing Commons Parcel

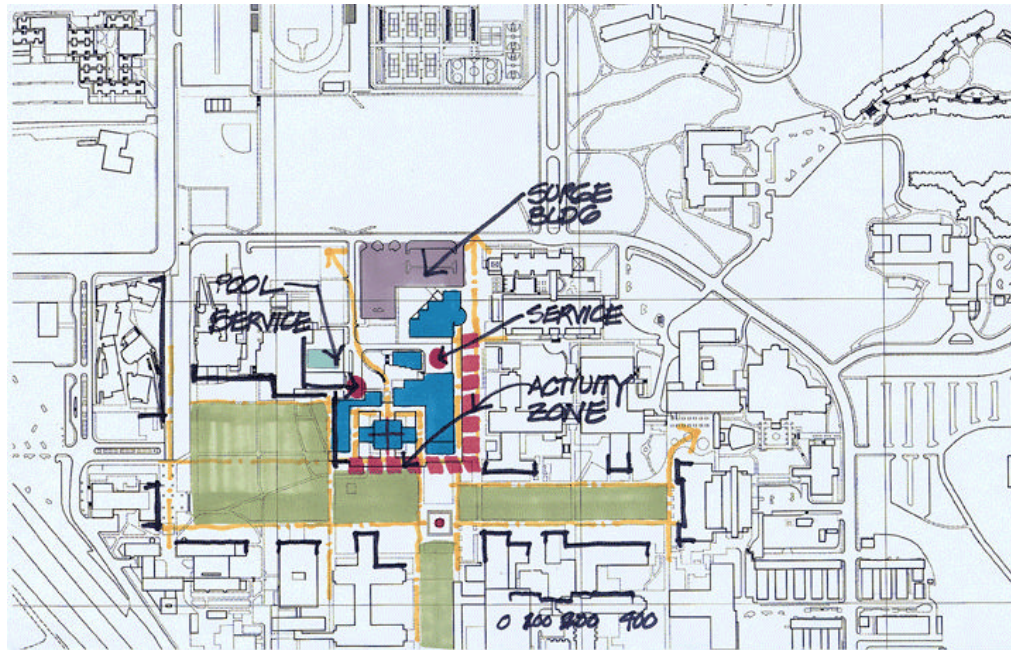


The area surrounding the existing Commons provides several constraints and opportunities:

To the north, the Campus Surge Building, currently under construction, will become a significant pedestrian traffic generator. Also to the north, between the Commons and the Bookstore is a major service corridor that serves the Commons and Bookstore, but also provides fire and service to the science buildings to the east.

The east and south sides of the Commons are the areas where there is the most student traffic, and the most “see and be seen” activity.

Finally, from a pedestrian perspective, it is important that the new Commons be pedestrian-permeable, responding to, and allowing easy pedestrian access on all sides.



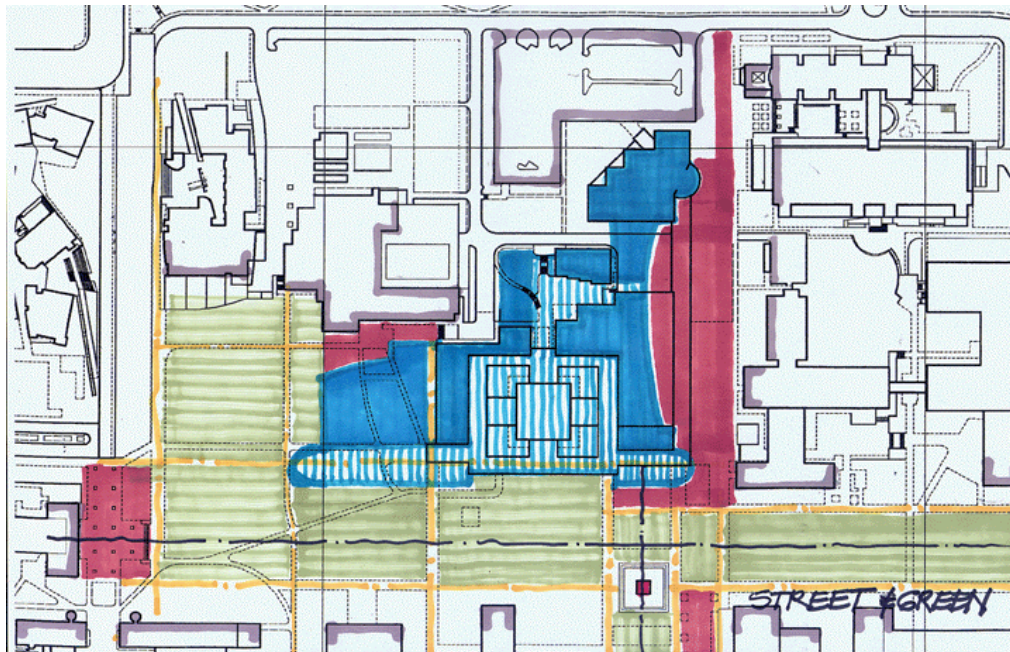
Much of what makes a successful campus center is linked to the making of a “great place”, combined with events, activities and uses that draw students and create community. The climate of the Inland Empire area of Southern California is often pleasant, though characterized by cooler winters and hotter summers than the adjacent coastal areas. With appropriate shading and landscape, the surrounding open spaces can be used with programmed indoor areas to create a Commons significantly larger in functional area than what could be realized in a harsher climate or more urban site.

Site Response and Edges

Several ways of creating related or linked indoor and outdoor space were examined: “street and green”, “engaging the quad” and “interior court.” The final scheme derives from the “engaging the quad” approach, creating two different kinds of exterior space and creating a different quality to each of the major facades of the Commons.

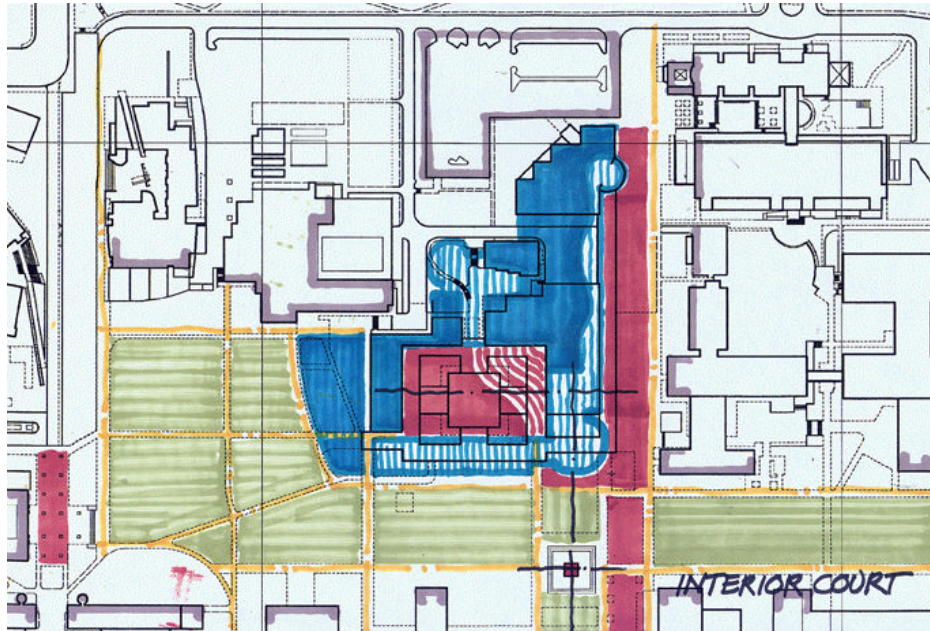
Street and Green

The “**Street and Green**”, creates two distinct, but related public aspects to the Commons—a streetscape running north/south at the east side, and an interior space or atrium opening onto the grassy lawn at the center of campus.



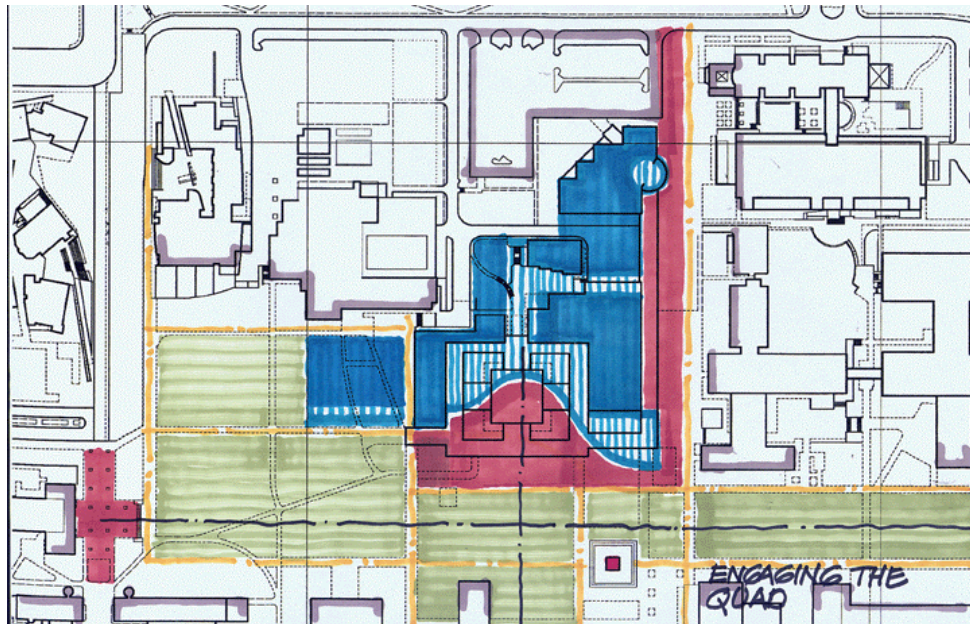
Interior Court

The “**Interior Court**”, creates an outdoor space inside the perimeter of the Commons—something that would create a unique sense of place apart from the surrounding campus.



Engaging the Quad

“Engaging the quad” is a variant of street and green: creating an urban plaza and outdoor activity area at the south side of the Commons that enhances the lawn in the manner of an urban piazza.



The existing site area of approximately 150,000 GSF has several significant advantages, particularly that it builds upon the existing campus center and patterns of circulation and use. Its major limitation is that it requires expansion in place: remodeling/expanding in an area that needs to continue to serve student needs during the construction process.

Advantages

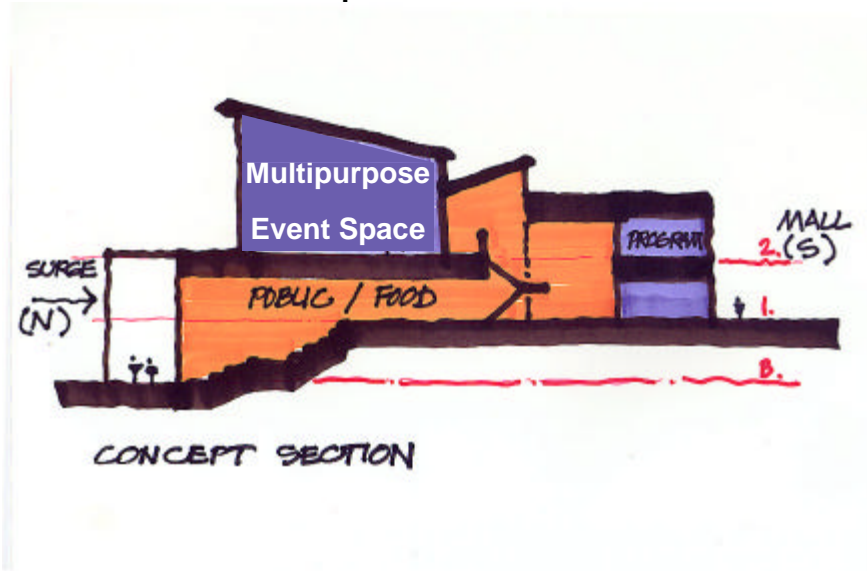
- Builds upon existing facilities
- Creates linkage to existing bookstore
- Located at the center of campus-the symbolic as well as the physical center
- Potential to create a well-used “destination” at the center

Disadvantages

- Must renovate in place
- May require removal of existing occupied space
- Requires phased construction/longer disruption due to construction

Another significant consideration for this site is density. As UCR grows to more than 20,000 students, what is the appropriate density for a site at the center of the campus? Buildings of 2 and 3 stories can be used without significant reliance on elevators, and allow for a “public to private” zoning of functions. Therefore the site should be built at a density of 2-3 stories to create a denser area of student activity as well as preserving open space for future use.

Concept Site Section



Parking and Vehicular Circulation

The existing Commons site is almost totally “landlocked”. The only vehicular access point is via a service road that enters the Commons parcel at the northwest. This road does not provide access to any general parking.

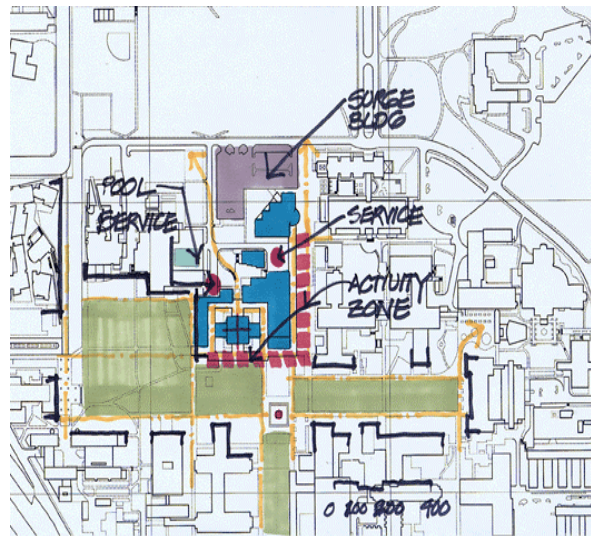
It is anticipated that the majority of the traffic to the Commons will be pedestrian, and come from the immediate campus area. A large number of the main academic facilities are within a 5-minute walk, and there is a significant population in university housing and apartments within a 10 to 15 minute walk to the north. UCR does not plan to provide on-site parking for this facility. Existing and future University parking facilities will be used to satisfy the demand generated. The primary source of additional people using the Commons will come from the Campus population, and that as the campus population (students, faculty and staff) grows, there may be the associated demand for parking the will need to be met through a University wide parking strategy.

Handicapped-accessible parking spaces should be adjacent to the building consistent with the UCR policy for ADA accessibility campus-wide.

Service

Delivery, trash and emergency vehicles for the Commons, Bookstore and Science Buildings to the East use the service access road that enters at the northwest end of the site.

The existing Commons has two service docks, one at the north end of Costo Hall, at the lower (basement) level, and one at the north end of the Dining Hall at the main level. Currently this service area also functions as parking for a few University vehicles.



It appears that the existing loading area adjacent to food service has sufficient space to serve the entire needs of an expanded Commons facility.

Site Geotechnical Issues

The Structural Engineer as part of this study reviewed existing geotechnical information. While further site specific investigation should be performed as part of the building design process, available information indicates that there are no significant barriers to construction of a 2-3 story Commons Expansion in the current Commons area (Parcel 5). Please see the Section 9 structural investigation for more detailed information, including structural design criteria.

Landscape

Landscape investigation was limited to campus and urban design study by the architect. It is anticipated that specific landscapes concepts, including plant materials, streetscape materials, lighting, etc will be developed as part of the design process, and will be consistent with overall campus standards and specific guidelines and recommendations that come from the ongoing LRDP update.

The existing Commons sits on the north side of the main east-west oriented campus mall. To the east this open space is linear and formal, immediately south of the commons it is large and open, but without formal definition beyond the carillon tower. As the mall continues to the west it becomes much less formal and more park-like.

To the immediate east of the Commons is one of the major north-south pedestrian walks on the campus. This walk, though well used, lacks definition as a pedestrian street and gathering place.

We envision several planning goals that should be enhanced through the landscape development:

- Strengthen and extend the formal, linear nature of the mall west to include the Commons expansion.
- Enhance the pedestrian and social experience at the east side of the site and link the Commons with the Bookstore.(2)
- Create an outdoor focus for the campus and Commons—"the Forum" that can be the outdoor living room and entertainment venue for the Commons.(3)
- Provide seating for 1000 students in a variety of outdoor settings—eating, socializing, studying.
- Create a landscape draw for pedestrians arriving from the north, and clarify the separation between people and vehicles at this location.(1)
- Provide environmentally sensitive, drought tolerant plant materials that also work to mitigate the effects of hot summers and cool winters.

