

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

COMPREHENSIVE CAMPUS MASTER PLAN

Executive Summary



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INTRODUCTION

As the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) approaches its 50-year anniversary it is preparing to face significant challenges to establish the necessary physical environment to meet its academic mission. These challenges include rapid community population growth, a landlocked Maryland Parkway Campus, changing pedagogic and research methodologies, advancing technological requirements, inadequate infrastructure, and restrictive funding.

To help address these issues, UNLV initiated the development of a major update of the Comprehensive Campus Master Plan (Master Plan). The Master Plan is intended to assess and quantify the campus' ability to accommodate physical expansion and provide a flexible "blueprint" to guide this growth in a consistent and harmonious manner with the institutional mission and the campus' unique character. The plan is truly an "opportunity framework" within which the university has flexibility to strategically manage physical growth and optimize its financial investments on its campus.

While the master planning effort's primary focus was for the main Maryland Parkway Campus, the Shadow Lane Campus was also studied, and specific recommendations are provided for accommodating its future development.

INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Founded in 1957, UNLV is comprised of a 337-acre Maryland Parkway Campus, 18-acre Shadow Lane campus, and several independent parcels located throughout the Las Vegas Valley. The university has rapidly grown from 13,000 gross square feet (gsf) of building space to over 3.8 million gsf in 45 years and is now classified as a doctoral degree granting institution with more than 26,162 students and 2,595 faculty/staff members (fall 2003 data). Student enrollments continue to outpace projections. This will require the consideration of several options to manage institution population growth and to maintain and potentially extend quality facilities for education, student enrichment, research, and other university initiatives and activities.



Figure 1: UNLV circa 1963



Figure 2: UNLV circa 2002

INSTITUTIONAL VISION

To enhance our presence as one of the major higher education resources in the southwest, transforming and adding value to the community (local, national, and international) through the creation of a superior learning environment; the development of meaningful research, original scholarship, and creative performance; and by manifesting a commitment to service beginning in Las Vegas and Southern Nevada.

CAMPUS PLANNING PHILOSOPHY

UNLV has supported a planning philosophy, rooted in its mission and founded on the premise that the campus exists as a place for people including those who attend as students, those who serve as education and research professionals, and those who live in the surrounding community. High quality campuses are carefully orchestrated environments that allow for and inspire personal, physical, and spiritual growth. They are also incubators for learning, research, interaction, and communication. The campus' quality is measured in how well the physical environment supports its diverse constituents and functions. In the end, UNLV's physical campus environs are, and will be, an important barometer of its overall institutional success.

MASTER PLAN ATTRIBUTES

The Master Plan establishes a framework for coordinating future development and physical change. This framework establishes patterns and characteristics that maintain the campus' unique qualities, while identifying opportunities for growth. Because the physical environment has a tremendous influence on the excellence of education, quality of life, and the image of the university, the Master Plan serves as a guide for shaping and reinforcing the campus' unique attributes, institutional culture, and academic/research missions.

The Master Plan itself is not the only product of the planning process. The campus community, especially its leadership, has developed a clear understanding of, and commitment to, the plan's basic principles and concepts. This has been accomplished by stressing participation and interaction throughout the planning process so that the university can proceed with confidence in implementing the Master Plan in years to come.

The following attributes are integral to the UNLV planning approach:

- *Coherence and Flexibility:* To be useful over a long period of time, the Master Plan must provide a coherent and flexible framework for future decision-making. The plan has coherence by being based on known, stable elements such as significant facilities and major infrastructure elements. The plan has flexibility by putting as much emphasis on the uncertainties of the future as on known directions. The planning process has been used to examine assumptions, recognize unknowns, and consider the less certain variables such as budgets, enrollments, and program change.
- *Participation and Consensus:* This approach brings faculty, staff, students, and neighbors together to discuss the full range of issues and options. By encouraging an active dialogue, the planning process created a forum for sharing ideas and for educating the campus community about existing assets that merit protection, factors that limit development, and alternative approaches to achieve desired results. This participation yielded an accurate, responsive plan that is both widely understood and supported by consensus.

- *Communication:* Essential to all human interaction, communication is the keystone to a successful planning process. Open communication was enabled through a variety of venues including multiple campus visits, interactive workshops, public open houses, a dedicated email address, and a university-based master plan Web site.
- *Implementation:* Implementation is the final test of all master-planning efforts. For the plan to be successful, realistic recommendations must be achieved, they must be clearly and fully presented, and the university's leadership must be fluent in understanding and using the Master Plan. This understanding has created a foundation for accurately assessing the implication of site-specific decisions so that individual projects can move forward with the confidence that each is meeting short-term needs consistent with long-term campus objectives. Through specific project review and approval, the Board of Regents will continually guide Master Plan implementation and maintain governance procedures.

KEY PLANNING ISSUES AND MASTER PLAN GOALS

The Master Plan's overarching goal is to create a well-ordered, safe, educationally effective, and distinctive environment for the university. To achieve this unity, the Master Plan recommends strengthening existing physical relationships, challenging inefficient campus organizational patterns, and developing compelling new patterns. Throughout the master planning process, special attention has been placed on opportunities to improve campus organization, image, and character while providing an adequate infrastructure to accommodate growth. The Master Plan's goals are derived from the following key planning issues:

Growth and Capacity

Issue: UNLV has grown from 13,000 gsf of building space on a single site to over 3.8 million gsf on multiple campuses in 45 years. With land as a diminishing resource at the Maryland Parkway Campus location, the Master Plan needs to address each campus' capacity to support future development. It must also address how the university can most efficiently increase infrastructure capacity levels to meet future demands.

Goal: Assess and quantify each campus' ideal development capacity including thresholds where significant infrastructure improvements are required to support the desired growth and balancing growth within a pleasant environment.

Distinctive Environment

Issue: The Maryland Parkway Campus has evolved in response to its unique physical setting and academic mission. Each campus must be well organized, safe, and portray a physically distinctive setting specifically tailored to UNLV.

Goal: Identify appropriate development patterns and design guidelines representing the university's urban and desert location.

Image and Identity

Issue: The campus' physical appearance is a direct reflection of the university's ability to achieve excellence. The Master Plan shall provide recommendations and design guidelines that appropriately reflect UNLV's position as a premier metropolitan research university.

Goal: Establish planning recommendations and design guidelines that will provide a high quality image and identity for the university consistent across all campuses.

Student Life

Issue: The university's enrollment, programmatic, and physical growth require new and/or improved facilities devoted to student life.

Goal: Improve the physical environment for students in terms of facility types and facility quality, and quality-of-life amenities.

Implementation

Issue: A successful master plan is one that can be implemented over time while continually reinforcing its planning principles and strategies.

Goal: Establish a flexible overall planning framework that will define general directions while maintaining the ability to respond to unanticipated opportunities.

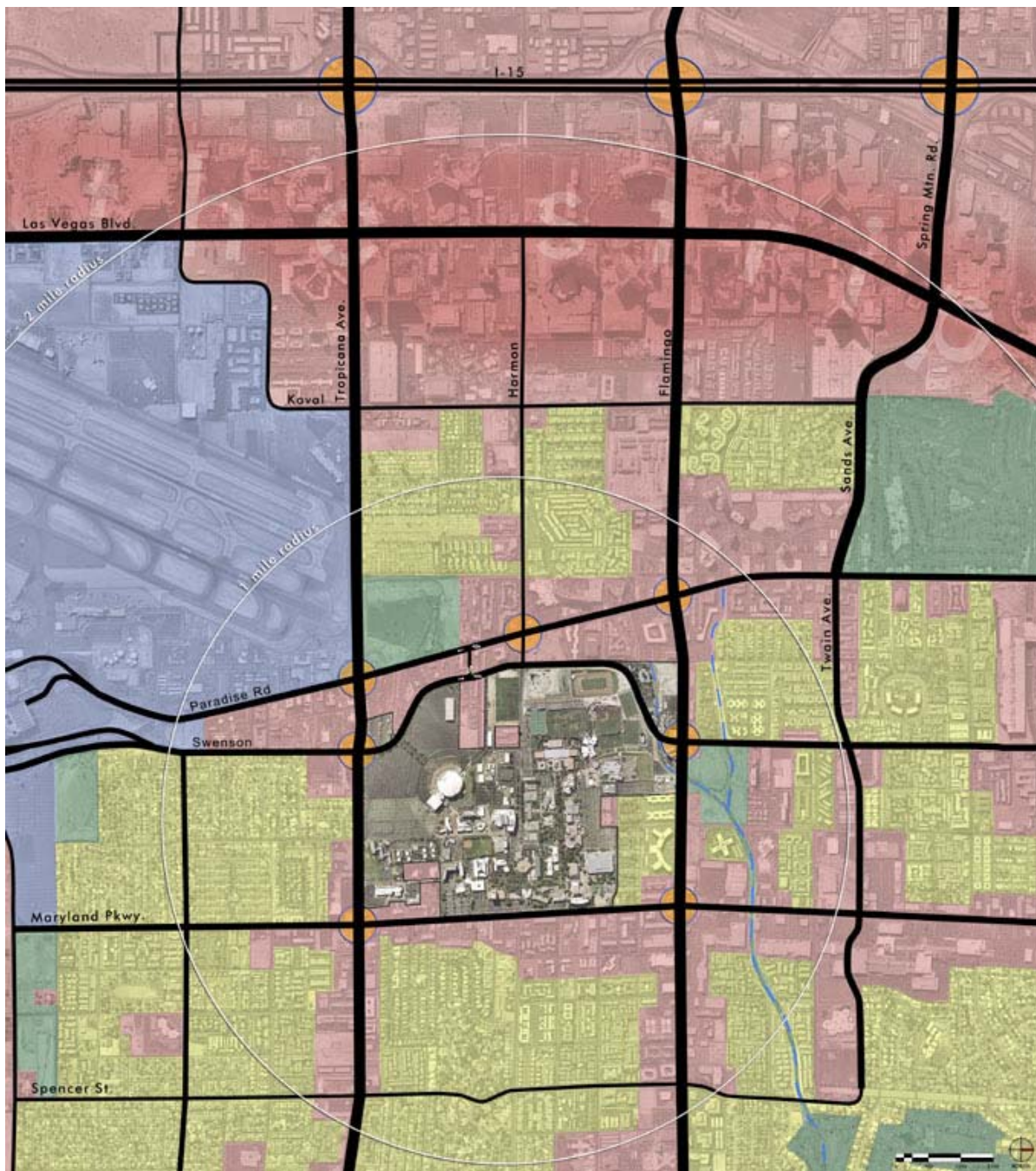


Figure 3: Community Context

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES – MAIN CAMPUS

UNLV's Maryland Parkway Campus is located within Clark County, Nevada, less than a mile from McCarran International Airport in the heart of Las Vegas. Clark County, with an expanding population of more than 1.5 million people, is both culturally and historically diverse. The County Comprehensive Planning Department forecasts a population of almost two million people by 2010. For UNLV, this added population fuels institutional growth, but compounds already complicated planning issues. The campus is situated in a well-defined pattern of urban sprawl that consists of a mix of commercial, service, and residential land uses. The "strip-type" land use patterns do not provide a distinguishable community image for the campus. As a result, the campus must begin to establish an appropriate identity that sets itself apart from the non-descript adjacent land uses.

The Maryland Parkway Campus has evolved exponentially over its half-century of existence. As the campus has grown in acreage, building square footage, and population, its physical organization has become more complex and disjointed. In the last several decades, the campus has continued to develop while diluting the original academic core's unique quality and character. Limited budgets, schedules, and planning have reinforced the notion of the campus as a collection of unrelated buildings, parking, and open spaces with less emphasis placed on the careful composition of open spaces, architecture, circulation corridors, and infrastructure systems. To compound these issues, the Maryland Parkway Campus is landlocked between major roadways requiring strategic use of its most precious resource – land.

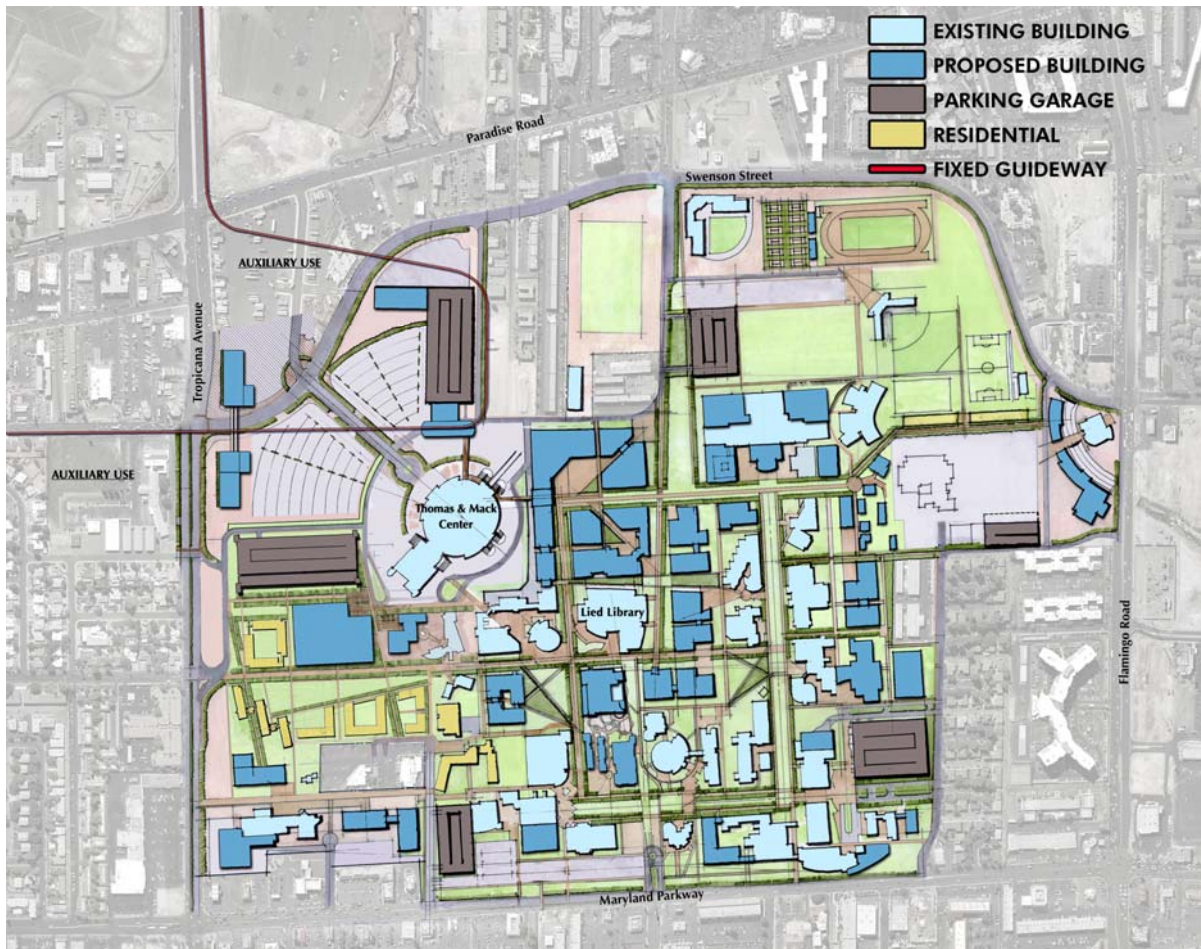


Figure 4: Maryland Parkway Campus Master Plan

The Master Plan provides organizational strategies to effectively enable and manage future development. They are derived from the established university mission, key planning issues and related goals, assessment of existing campus conditions, and exploration of alternative organizational concepts. The organizational strategies for the Maryland Parkway Campus are built around the following five major planning principles.

Principle One: Strategically Develop the Academic Core

- Prioritize land use adjacent to the Lied Library for future academic needs surrounded by research, housing, recreation, the arts, support services, and parking.
- Strategically infill new buildings amongst the current development pattern, reinforcing the dominant grid.
- Expand the existing on-campus student housing neighborhood along Tropicana Avenue.
- Strengthen the academic core’s pedestrian nature by removing interior vehicular circulation, moving parking to the edges, establishing a strong open space network, and dedicating corridors for service vehicles independent from those for pedestrians.
- Relocate and consolidate plant operations and maintenance (i.e., support services) to the campus periphery.

Principle Two: Extend and Reinforce the Existing Pattern of Malls and Open Spaces

- Organize the campus around a series of neighborhood activity nodes interconnected by a strong pedestrian and open space system.
- Create a strong hierarchy of interconnected spaces and paths that build upon the existing malls to establish a primary pedestrian corridor loop with secondary pathways that attach to the expanding residential and academic/research neighborhoods to the south and north, respectively.
- Recognize and reinforce the pedestrian circulation system by careful building placement.
- Develop a centralized open space in the heart of the academic core adjacent to the Lied Library that is surrounded by a mixture of building use types to facilitate academic and social interaction.
- Maintain existing and create new open spaces of various sizes and character to support a variety of uses including structured recreation, passive recreation/active gathering, and individual contemplation.
- Develop a “signature” open space along Maryland Parkway.



Figure 5: Maryland Parkway Open Space (Artist’s Rendering)

Principle Three: Provide a Multi-Modal Circulation System

- Strengthen the pedestrian-friendly academic core through a hierarchy of dedicated corridors with minimal vehicular conflicts.
- Establish efficient vehicular access from the surrounding community street system to campus parking garages wherein people can convert from a vehicular to pedestrian circulatory mode.
- Enable pedestrian movement from parking facilities into campus with minimal vehicular conflicts.

- Establish major vehicular entrances at existing signalized intersections that provide convenient and safe access to major parking facilities.
- Provide an adequate number of parking spaces per population type (e.g., employees, residents, commuters, and visitors) consistent with national averages, adjusted for local modal trends, for similar institutional types. The plan accommodates approximately 12,900 parking spaces in both garages and surface lots. Due to the increasing value of land, stacking parking vertically is prudent to conveniently serve customers and employees.
- Appropriately distribute the parking supply to conveniently support campus population centers. Multiple mixed-use parking garages are anticipated to replace surface spaces lost to new building construction.
- Strengthen the availability and utilization of alternative transit modes (potential for a fixed guideway connecting the airport to the Resort Corridor and a bus-rapid transit route along Maryland Parkway) to reduce the requirement for private automobiles access to and storage on the campus. Coordinate with current and future Regional Transportation Commission initiatives and provide incentives for utilization.



Figure 6: Fixed Guideway Station (Artist's Rendering)

Principle Four: Strengthen Image and Identity

- Provide a stronger, more consistent edge condition that sets the campus apart from the surrounding urban sprawl and visual clutter.
- Improve “curb appeal” by bringing quality open space, landscaping, and signage to the campus edges.
- Remove Maude Frazier Hall and develop a signature open space along the historic Maryland Parkway entrance with the Lied Library as a visual terminus.
- Reinforce the campus’ distinct desert context and composition with sensitive and sustainable design responses.

Principal Five: Optimize Development Capacity

- Maximize land utilization by master planning to permit the potential addition of approximately 3.6 million new gsf of building space for a total campus development capacity of approximately 7.4 million gsf. Within a range of 150 gsf to 200 gsf per student, it is estimated that all of the systems in the Master Plan can accommodate approximately 35,000 students without overtaxing the effectiveness of any one system.

- Optimize each proposed building envelope's development capacity utilizing minimal building heights appropriate to anticipated building types and locations. Consider locating multiple programmatic uses into combined facilities of appropriate size.
- Partner to establish a strong mixed-use development along Maryland Parkway across from the campus' main entrance.
- Consider development that will facilitate a pedestrian bridge for safer access across the street.
- Prioritize property acquisition for parcels within the Maryland Parkway, Tropicana Avenue, Swenson Street, and Flamingo Road boundaries along with the former Paradise Elementary School site and airport property north of the Orange Parking Lot, which are currently leased. Secondary acquisition priorities should be for contiguous property across Maryland Parkway and Tropicana Avenue.
- Utilize structured parking, and where appropriate, consider incorporating symbiotic mixed uses such as commercial, office, support services, and recreation.
- Combine individual utility distribution lines into consolidated corridors.
- Revamp the electrical system to provide reliable and redundant service necessary for research program growth.
- Rework/relocate the communication hub at Maude Frazier Hall.
- Implement infrastructure improvements to remedy all current deficiencies. Develop a proactive infrastructure enhancement program to cover advancing technologies and/or predictable periodic replacement.

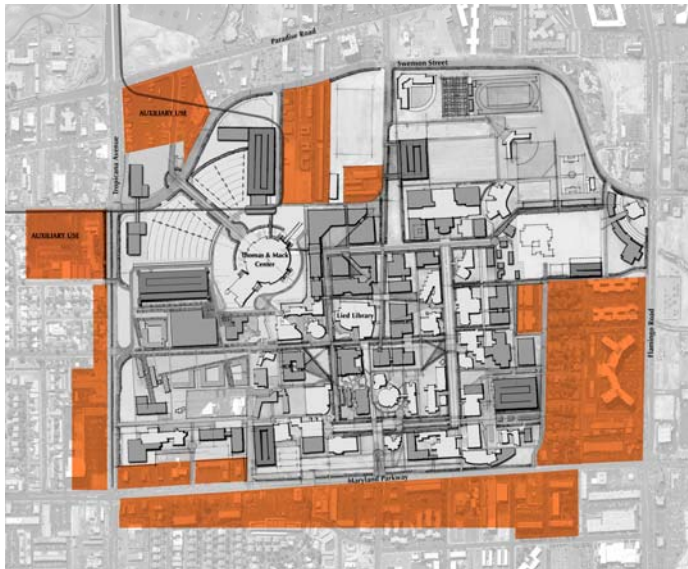


Figure 7: Maryland Parkway Campus Property Acquisition Strategies



Figure 8: Maryland Parkway Campus Master Plan – Aerial Perspective

REGIONAL CAMPUSES

A key strategy to achieving the university's mission is development and enhancement of satellite campuses with distinct academic or research foci. Development potential is being studied for the Shadow Lane, Research, and North Las Vegas Campuses.

Shadow Lane Campus

The Shadow Lane Campus was identified to enable graduate programs in the biomedical sciences, and it exists within an established urban network of land uses primarily devoted to the medical sciences and health care industries.

Utilizing established planning goals and principles, a Campus Framework Plan was developed to identify the optimal development capacity and physical configuration for the campus. The following strategies are proposed:

- Organize buildings around a strong central open space.
- Increase building heights along the campus' border with the interstate for increased visibility.
- Provide two primary vehicular entrances, one from Charleston Boulevard and the other from Shadow Lane.
- Accommodate a majority of the required parking in a multi-level structure. Provide parking at a ratio of one space for every 330 gsf of development.
- Provide a unified and high-quality image through landscaping and signage.
- Enable approximately 231,000 new gsf of building space for a total potential development capacity of almost 420,000 gsf.
- Consider property acquisition for all adjacent parcels along Desert Lane and Charleston Boulevard.

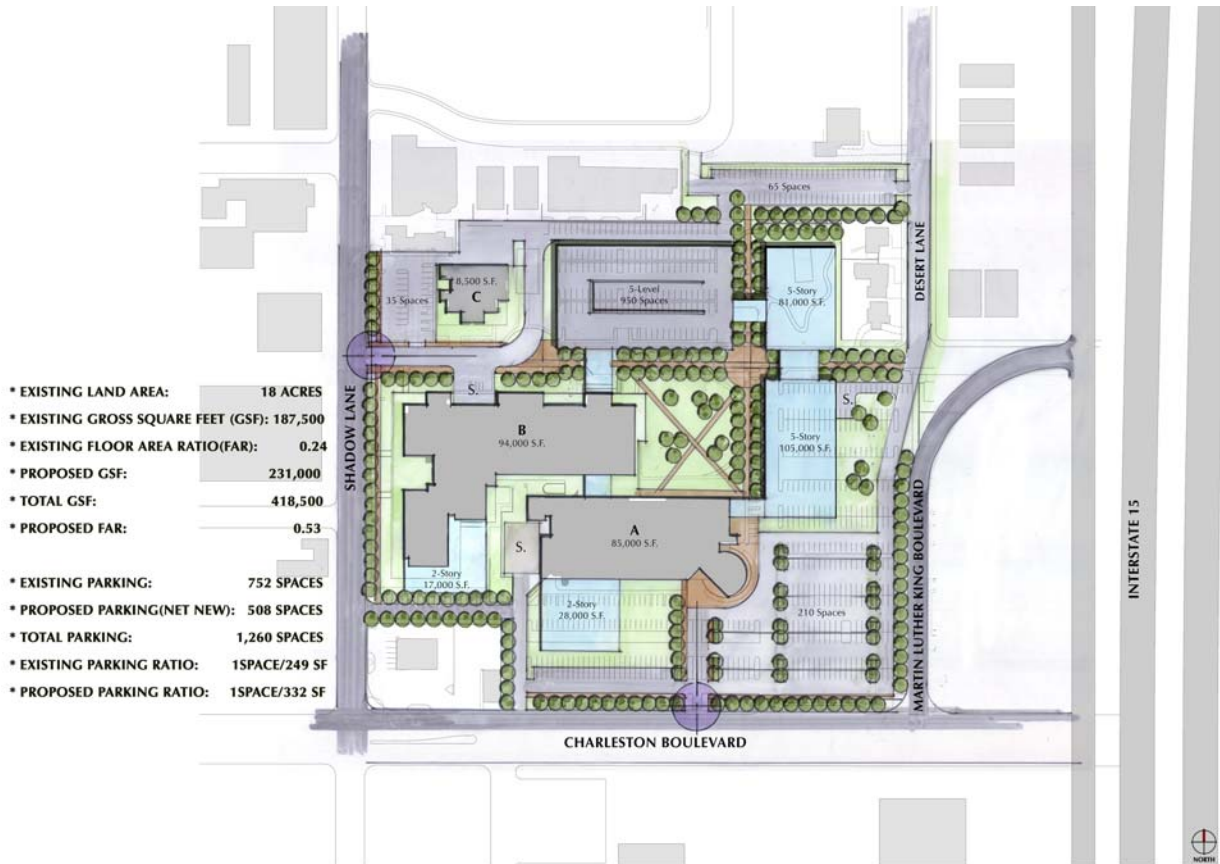


Figure 9: Shadow Lane Campus Master Plan



Figure 10: Shadow Lane Campus Property Acquisition Strategies