

## vii. Movement and Wayfinding

### *A Unified System for Vehicular and Pedestrian Traffic and a Strengthened Identity of Place*



The physical characteristics of a campus should enhance formal and informal interactions and minimize intrusions that displace the opportunity for learning, social discourse, festivity and relaxation. Cars, buses, service vehicles and bicycles disrupt pedestrian movement, which serves as the most desirable means of transportation between classes and leads to chance encounters, the exchange of information and discussion.

Approximately 60,000 people arrive at and depart from the University each day. Because of limited housing available on or in proximity to the campus, most students, faculty and staff rely on some form of vehicular transportation to travel to and from campus. UT has generated a network of car, bus, service vehicle and bicycle systems that conflict with pedestrian movement. Although it is not practical to eliminate these systems, it is possible to zone and organize them with the goal of bringing pedestrian movement to the forefront.

The design of the master plan diminishes the presence of vehicles in the core campus and returns it to pedestrians. Modifications to the street network in and around the central part of the campus address concerns of circulation, street crossings, walking atmosphere and conflicts among pedestrians, bicycles and vehicles on sidewalks and streets.

Access to the campus and travel within the campus are two distinct but related issues. Eighty-five years ago, the original 40 Acres established a clear center for student, faculty and administrative personnel. The 40 Acres, which did not extend significantly beyond 24th Street to the north and 21st Street to the south, were the heart and soul of the campus. Time, however, has rearranged the perimeter of the campus and created new areas of activity, making the campus center undefined. The master plan formally shifts the heart of the campus to the east to North Congress.

The master plan will reinforce the South Mall as a visual and ceremonial icon. The South Mall, which includes the plaza area just south of the Main Building, marks Cret's original north-south axis. Under the new master plan, the North Congress approach to the campus will be the primary route for north-south pedestrian movement throughout the campus. However, the Main Building and the Tower will remain the most important symbols of The University of Texas at Austin.

*What was once a campus on the edge of town, UT is now surrounded by the Austin Metropolitan area. Austin's population has consistently doubled every 20 years, totaling over 500,000 in the City of Austin and one million in the Metropolitan area. Transportation will continue to be of prime concern on campus as UT constitutes almost sixty percent of the Capital Metro's ridership.*

**Pedestrian Movement** | The master plan will tip the balance of transportation toward pedestrians to encourage walking and ensure their safe and timely movement throughout the campus. It directs movement to, from and within the campus according to a more complex set of categories than is currently recognized. Options for pedestrians, bicycles, automobiles and transit are designed with a carefully balanced role for each.

Campus design is rooted in the design of the traditional village, with a variety of easily accessible spaces for exchanges among inhabitants. The master plan includes pedestrian spaces of different size, quality and character, ranging from narrow paths designed for leisurely movement, to the straightest and shortest routes to classes, to walks devoid of any encounters with cars, to "walking streets" (accessible to service vehicles but with emphasis placed on the pedestrian), to separated sidewalks along streets designed for vehicles. Pedestrians will be able to access the neighboring city easily by crossing

important traffic corridors on walkways raised to the level of sidewalks to ensure that cars slow down.

Bikes and the proposed Austin light rail system have been given prominence as a means of shortening the time needed to cross the campus, and buses that loop the campus have been included as alternative means of transportation. Cars will have limited presence in the central area of the campus, and parking needs will be accommodated by the addition of garages.

Ten minutes has come to represent the maximum amount of time people are willing to walk between buildings. The transportation network of buses and shuttles has been redesigned to conform to this 10-minute interval, making foot traffic more leisurely and characteristic of a park-like environment.



*Automobile-free zones have been increased to provide a greater pedestrian environment.*

**Bicycles** | Bicycles can cross the campus quickly and efficiently without adding to the load of motorized vehicles, and allow a return to the ideal 10-minute transportation time. The new master plan gives them a clear status on the campus.

Bicycles will be prohibited from special areas of pedestrian movement. Instead, the master plan redesigns campus routes to include bicycle paths, lanes, roadways and corridors, with bicycle traffic and parking permitted exclusively on and in designated streets and areas. Recreational bicycle paths will run parallel to pedestrian paths. Paths for bicycles along North Congress will carry special markings distinguishing them from all other paths along the street. Bike lanes will be separated within traffic corridors and used where space permits, such as the existing bicycle lanes along Guadalupe.

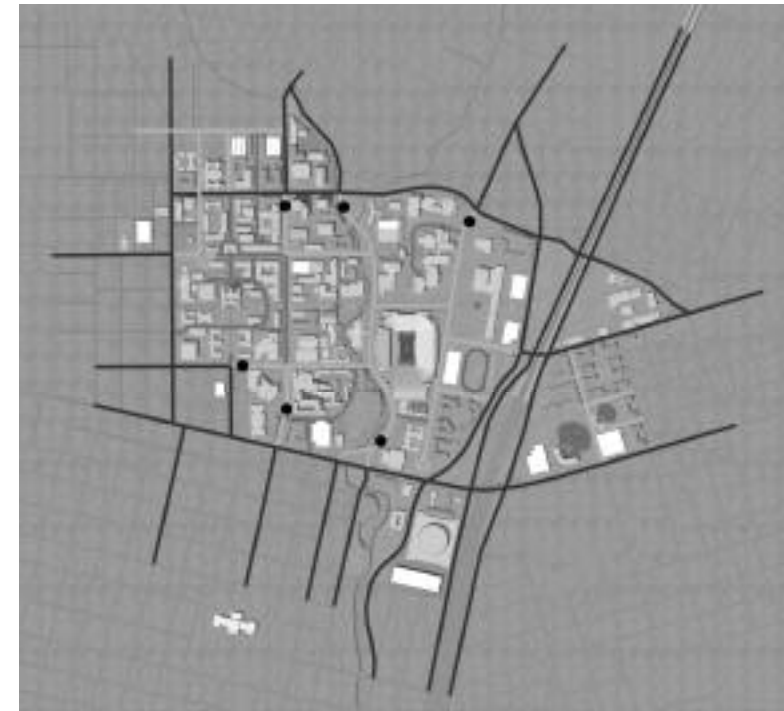
Although these bikeways are the backbone of the system, alternative routes will be available to bicyclists. Bikes will be permitted without preferential treatment on any street that serves normal vehicular traffic.

Bicycle parking will be provided in ample supply and kept as close as possible to the path system so that legal parking and pathways reinforce each other and encourage a self-policed system. Possible locations include major activity nodes, such as libraries, the Flawn Academic Center, recreation centers, intramural fields and student unions. Bike parking should be built in selected vehicle parking lots and garages and along selected roadway links. Using these guidelines, resident students will have easy access to their bicycles.



*Bicycles began to become popular on-and-off campus in the 1970s. As the campus expanded and classes grew far apart, a bike was often needed to get to the next class within ten minutes. In the 1970s, students were no longer restricted to "approved" housing and often lived several miles from the campus. Although shuttle bus service was available, numerous students rode motor bikes or bicycles. In response, parking places on the edges of the campus were reserved for motor bikes, and racks near buildings were provided for bicycles.*

**Changes in the Road Network** | North Congress will be closed to vehicular traffic between 21st and 24th Streets to become a pedestrian mall for the campus with food vendors, seating areas and bicycle paths. Pedestrian access between the central campus and other areas to the north will be facilitated by the closing of 24th Street between Whitis Avenue and North Congress. Inner Campus Drive will also be closed to vehicular traffic. Only service vehicles, traveling before and after peak pedestrian times, will be permitted to use this road. Dean Page Keeton Street between Whitis and the Engineering Pedestrian Bridge will be narrowed from six to four lanes of traffic, and street-side parking will be removed to provide for safer crossings by students between the central and north campuses.



*Changes to road network.*

**Parking Garages** | Multiple-level parking garages will replace surface parking displaced by new buildings and pedestrian-only streets. New garages will also help satisfy the demand for commuter parking. The elimination of on-street parking in favor of garages will have positive environmental effects as well, reducing the amount of impervious area on campus for improved water run-off.

The master plan includes parking garages at the perimeter of the campus and makes these facilities accessible to other ways and means of transportation, such as shuttle buses and walking paths. Garages will allow alternate parking for faculty, staff and students and will accommodate guests at special events held on campus. A total of ten locations have been identified for new garages and two additions to existing garages are planned.



*Parking structures have been located at the perimeter of the campus to increase the pedestrian environments.*

**Service Vehicles** | Currently, service vehicles are permitted to use virtually all roadways on campus at any time of day. Within the core campus in particular, this practice interferes with pedestrian mobility and threatens safety. The campus belongs first to pedestrians. To safeguard this principle while allowing the campus transportation network to serve the needs of the University successfully, service vehicles will be routed through inobtrusive roadways with minimum consequence to the pedestrian. Service vehicles and trucks will be prohibited from several of the streets within the core campus and will use alternate routes along the periphery. Vehicles will reach inter-campus loading areas from the periphery and return to the periphery along the same route used for entry. Crossing or paralleling major pedestrian paths with service vehicle paths will be avoided to enhance both the quality and safety of the pedestrian environment.

There will also be restricted vehicle use of specific service routes during certain times of the day. Some streets will be considered limited access, while others will be designated full access. These revised traffic patterns for service vehicles will diminish confrontation with pedestrians, especially during peak times.



*Service Plan*

**Shuttle Buses** | Approximately 15,000 students, or one-third of the students enrolled at the University, use public transit as their primary means of transportation to and from campus. Capital Metro operates a highly successful University-oriented bus system that accommodates nearly 50,000 one-way passenger trips each day.

The shuttle bus network comprises two distinct systems: the Regional Shuttle and Intra-Campus Shuttle. The master plan proposes the removal of the bus layover at the traffic circle off San Jacinto at 23rd Street; the parking of buses at this location on the east mall axis reduces the possibility of using the circle as a pedestrian focal point. Bus layovers will be relocated to less central, less obtrusive locations to the north and south.

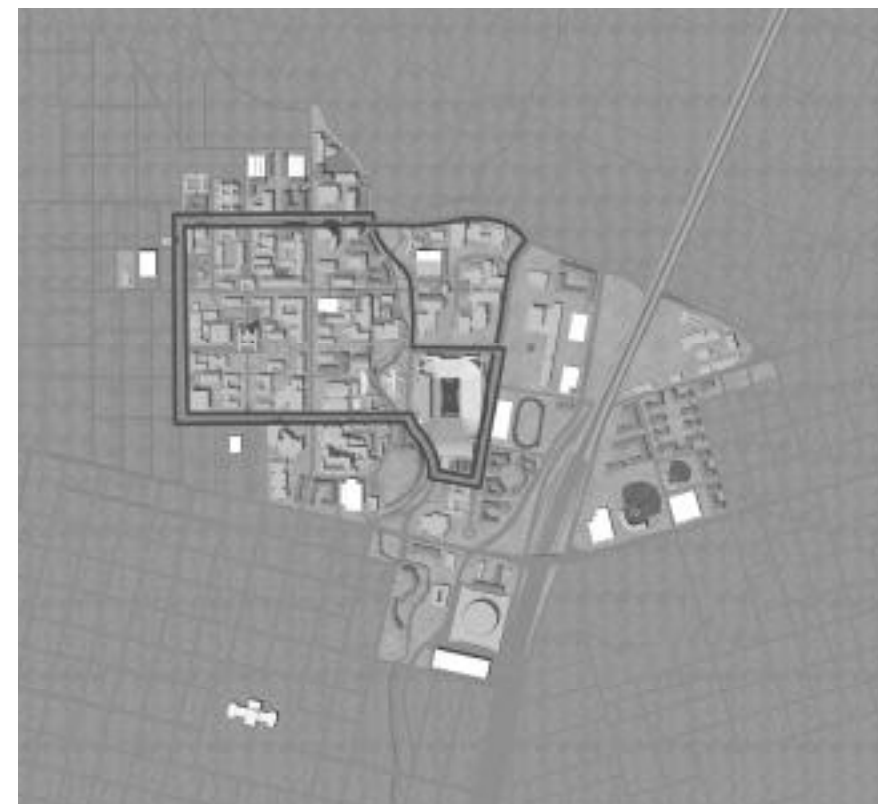
More significant changes are proposed for the Intra-Campus Shuttle system. Although the current routing of buses works well as an opposing loop system, the proposed changes will lessen the impact of buses on the central campus and improve the overall efficiency of the system. Changes include dividing the Intra-Campus Shuttle into three subsystems. The first subsystem will be the Commuter Express System, linking the east



**Staff Shuttle**

campus with the central campus to provide a fast and efficient trip to and from the core campus at peak times. Its use will place almost every major campus destination within a maximum five-minute walk to a transit stop.

The second subsystem proposed is called the Circulator System. It will combine the 40 Acres and local routes into a single, easily identifiable two-way system. The final subsystem envisioned is the Staff Shuttle System, which will connect the physical plant with the central campus.



**Circulator**



**Commuter Shuttle**



**Regional Shuttle**



**UT Shuttle Route Alignment A**



**UT Shuttle Route Alignment B**