

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.

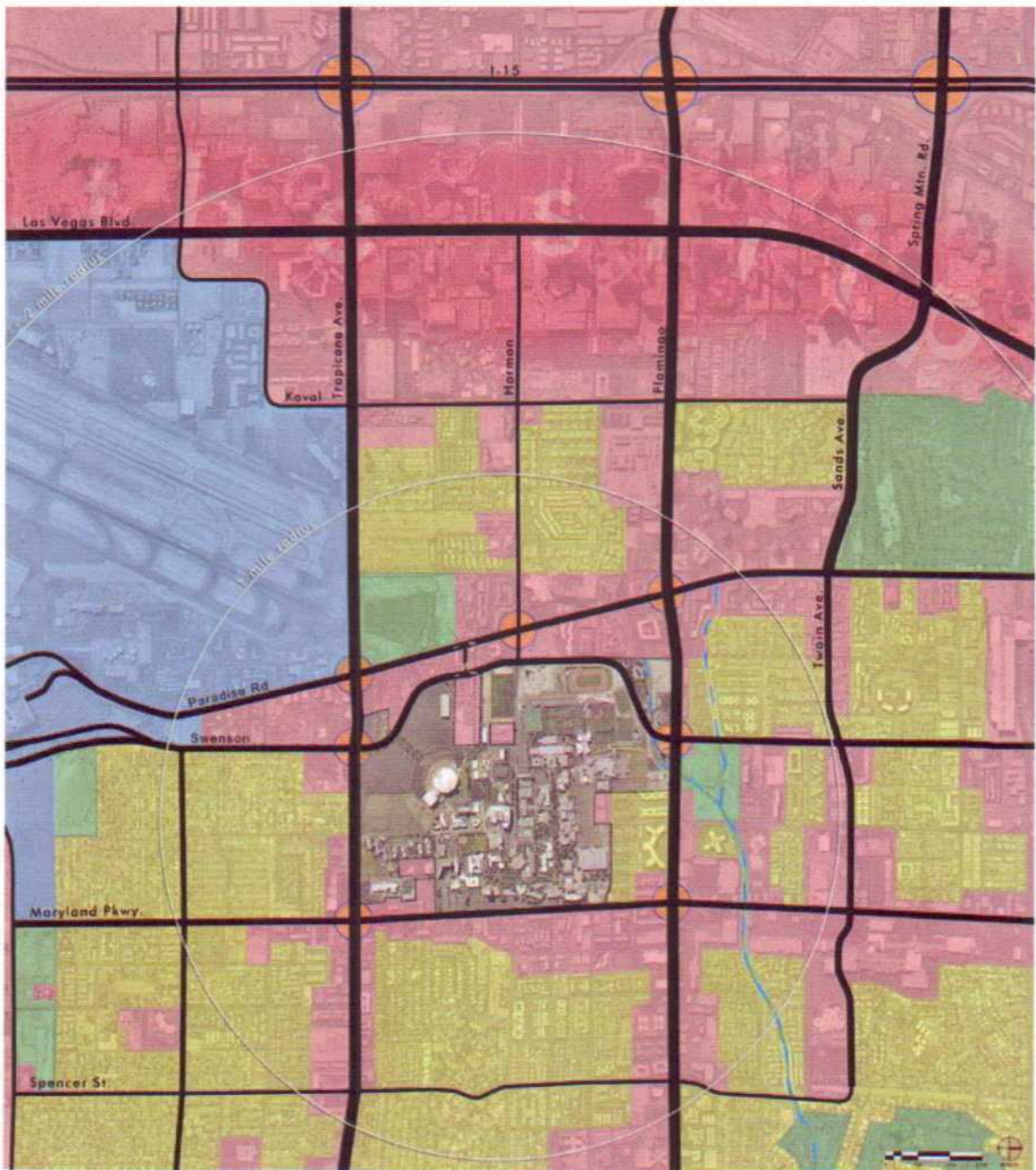


Figure 3: Community Context

