If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost; that is where they should be. Now put the foundations under them.

HENRY DAVID THOREAU
A study of existing conditions of the University of Wyoming campus provides a baseline for planning and helps shape the key decisions and directions set during the Long Range Development Plan process. This chapter draws from past and concurrent planning efforts as well as recent site surveys and stakeholder interviews.
Regional and Local Context

The University of Wyoming (UW) campus has a unique identity that is based in part on its distinctive climate and history. The University of Wyoming is located in the southeastern corner of Wyoming within the City of Laramie. Laramie is located on the high Laramie Plains at an elevation of 7,220 feet between two mountain ranges: the Snowy Range, about twenty miles to the west; and the Laramie Range, seven miles to the east. The Laramie River runs through Laramie toward its confluence with the North Platte River east of the Laramie Range.

Prior to Wyoming’s statehood, the University of Wyoming was established in 1886 by the Territorial Legislature as a land-grant college on a 20-acre tract of prairie at the eastern edge of Laramie.

Laramie lies in the Wyoming Basin eco-region, where native vegetation is short, mixed-grass prairie dominated by numerous grasses and shrub species. Because of the high elevation, winters are relatively long, and summers tend to be short and mild. The climate is generally a cool, semi-arid continental climate with annual precipitation at about ten inches per year and an annual snowfall of 42 inches.

Laramie Settlement History

Laramie was formed in 1866 as a tent city and was named for Jacques LaRamie, a French-Canadian fur trapper who was...
one of the first Europeans to visit the area. The Union Pacific Railroad is credited for the development of Laramie, with the first train arriving in town on May 9, 1868. The railroad was the largest employer in the town until after WWII. In January 1874, the first legal town government was established, along with many of Laramie’s historic buildings. At least twenty sites in Laramie are included on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Laramie’s earliest buildings were oriented along and perpendicular to the railroad track. These buildings help form the city’s Downtown Historic District, located on 1st, 2nd and 3rd Streets; and Ivinson Street and Grand Avenue.

Prior to Wyoming’s statehood, the University of Wyoming was established in 1886 by the Territorial Legislature as a land-grant college on a 20-acre tract of prairie at the eastern edge of Laramie. Old Main, located in the southwest area of west campus, once contained the entire University. At the time there was little to no development east of 15th Street.

**CAMPUS/COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIP**

Laramie’s economy is largely driven by the University, and both the City and the University’s futures are closely linked. The expansion of UW was inherently connected to the growth and development of the City of Laramie during the first fifty years of its existence. The two primary campus structures were built before the turn of the
century (Old Main and the Mechanical Arts Building) and helped to establish the eastern border of the city. Over the next century the University expanded throughout the eastern part of the city, interconnecting with residential neighborhoods. Today, there is a lack of primary connections that link Downtown Laramie to the University of Wyoming.

History of UW Campus Planning and Design

The campus landscape and buildings of the University of Wyoming represent more than a century of dynamic growth and change. As summarized in Chapter 1, the University has completed three major campus-wide plans over the course of its 123-year history:

- University of Wyoming Greater University Campus Master Plan, 1924;
- University of Wyoming Campus Master Plan, 1966; and
- University of Wyoming Preliminary Master Plan, 1991

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING GREATER UNIVERSITY CAMPUS MASTER PLAN, 1924

As early as 1909, the need for a plan had been championed by UW President Charles O. Merica. By 1920, the campus had grown from 40 to 62 acres, and three years later, it had expanded further eastward to encompass a total of 92 acres. In 1924, Laramie architect Wilbur Hitchcock, along with the Denver-based landscape architecture firm of McCrary, Cully and Carhart, drafted a development plan for the future growth of the

One of the campus’ most prominent open spaces was graded and landscaped in 1928 and later came to be known as Prexy’s Pasture (named after the University’s former president).

TOP LEFT AND RIGHT: UW campus evolution 1900-1925

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Laramie Campus: *University of Wyoming Greater University Campus Master Plan*. At that time, the campus was bounded by Ivinson Avenue on the south; 9th Street to the west; 15th Street to the east; and Lewis Street on the north.

Landscape architecture was an integral component of the plan, which established the configuration of major buildings around a quadrangle of open space—a classic design employed for university campuses across America. This open space was graded and landscaped in 1928 and later came to be known as Prexy’s Pasture. Roadways extended around Prexy’s Pasture and connected both the 13th and Fremont Street entrances. The basic configuration of the plan has been followed as new buildings were erected in the following decades around the central open space.

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING CAMPUS MASTER PLAN, 1966**

The 1966 Plan was informed by the 1965 Academic Plan enrollment projections, which were based on demographics predicted for the years 1965-1975. New facilities included remodeled buildings, parking lot and athletic field areas, as well as undeveloped reserve areas. The facilities were planned to support student enrollment at 8,000; 10,000; and 12,000. Some of the plan’s significant recommendations included closure of 15th Street to automobile traffic, designation of parking and lawn areas, and development plans for 1970, 1973 and 1976—based on projected enrollment.
The 1991 Plan provided direction for continuing physical development of the campus. The plan identified districts or zones designated for particular uses around campus to guide future development. Academic and research facilities, residence facilities, student services facilities, and athletics and recreation facilities define the primary districts of the University. A circulation framework was developed that identified major vehicle, bicycle and pedestrian routes; secondary, emergency and service vehicle routes; and existing and proposed parking areas. This included closing Prexy’s Pasture and Lewis and 15th Streets to through vehicle traffic. Other critical components of the plan included the preservation of Central Campus as a walking campus, articulation of campus entries and the preservation of historic development.

Along with these master plans, the University has undergone several strategic, academic, and facility planning efforts since the 1991 Master Plan. As part of the LRDP planning process, the existing conditions review included an analysis of these plans to insure consistency and prevent duplication of efforts. A complete list of these plans can be found in Volume III of the LRDP. Most are also available on the University website.
Map 3A Campus Zones

The campus can be broken into three primary areas for planning including West Campus between 9th Street and 15th Street, Central Campus between 15th Street and 22nd Street, and East Campus east of 22nd Street.
Map 3A **Campus Zones**

Source: University of Wyoming
The unique physical and historical characteristics of the area have helped UW establish a visual identity that is distinct from campuses in other parts of the country. Historically, the University developed on the western portion of the existing campus. While western campus contains the concentration of historic buildings and traditional open spaces, development on eastern campus has an open feel, with more opportunities for new growth. The variety and organization of uses between the eastern and western areas of campus also creates different opportunities for future development.
Based on the physical separation by the existing street network, the LRDP categorizes three different geographical areas of campus: West Campus, between 9th and 15th Streets; Central Campus, between 15th and 22nd Streets; and East Campus, between 22nd and 30th Streets.

A description of the campus conditions can be organized into the following six general elements: Land and Building Uses, Open Space System, Circulation and Parking, Signage and Wayfinding, Utility Infrastructure, and Sustainability.
UW’s academic and research facilities are concentrated on historic West Campus and the portion of Central Campus that is southeast and due east of Greenhill Cemetery. Campus and student support facilities, including University administration, are primarily located on West Campus with the strongest concentration immediately east and southeast of Prexy’s Pasture.

Athletics and recreation facilities are clustered on Central Campus around the War Memorial Stadium southeast of Greenhill Cemetery and East Campus northwest of Willett Drive and 22nd Street. The majority of general services such as shipping/receiving, storage and the Central Energy Plant are located on the northern edge of Central Campus along Harney Street.

**KEY ASSETS**

- There are several cohesive districts including academic and research on West Campus, athletics on Central Campus, and student housing on East Campus.
- The location of the athletic and recreation facilities allows for ample parking and sharing of these facilities with the City.
- The Wyoming Technology Business Center (WTBC) has potential for growth, as well as sufficient land area for expansion.

**MAJOR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

- Student housing is separated from West Campus and is in need of modernization. There are limited safe and efficient routes for pedestrians and bicyclists that connect campus housing with other major land uses.
- There is a general lack of a distinctive campus edge and prominent gateways at major campus entrances.
- The distance between facilities on West Campus and facilities east of 15th Street can result in challenging walking times between classes and the isolation of students, faculty, and staff.
Map 3B  Existing Campus Uses

- Academic and Support
- Service and Maintenance
- Research/Business
- Visitor-Oriented Mixed Use
- Athletics & Recreation
- Greenhouse
- Campus Apartments
- Greeks & Dormitories
- Campus Reserve
- Living Learning
- Campus Boundary
- Major Road
- Minor Road

Source: University of Wyoming
The UW campus has several types of open space, including campus plazas, campus greens, campus entry courts, recreational fields and collegiate sports facilities. Two major historic open spaces described in the 1924 Master Plan, and protected by state statute, restrict development potential on these areas: Prexy’s Pasture and the Southwest Campus Green. The recreation and athletic fields east of 22nd Avenue, including Jacoby Golf Course east of 30th Street, are extensively programmed open spaces. The largest plaza space on-campus is located above the Science Library Annex in the center of the sciences quad. There are also a number of entry courts of varying scales.

**KEY ASSETS**
- The formal open spaces on-campus provide a strong organizational structure for the Main Campus and westernmost East Campus. Fraternity Mall is a unifying element for the sororities and fraternities on Central Campus.
- Existing open spaces and opportunities for new open space on developable land allow new development to incorporate the natural environment into the design of buildings.
- The University owns land extending east of Jacoby Golf Course to 45th Street that is currently undeveloped and can be kept in reserve.
- The recreation fields east of 22nd Street provide a model for campus-community partnerships.

**MAJOR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**
- The conversion of Prexy’s Pasture and much of West Campus to pedestrian-only has made access for elderly and disabled individuals more challenging.
- The Greenhill Cemetery contributes to a real and perceived division of the east and west portions of campus.
- Fraternity Mall is bordered by streets and parking, creating an unsafe and uninviting open space.
- Many buildings are oriented towards one or two major entry plazas, leaving one or more edges of a facility as potential service entrances.
Map 3C  Open Space Path System

Source: University of Wyoming
Local and regional connections serve an important role in campus access, with more than two-thirds of the students and campus employees commuting from off-campus locations. Bicycle facilities on-campus include routes designated with signage, striped bicycle lanes with signage and off-street multi-use paths. The pedestrian system on-campus consists of sidewalks along roadways and pedestrian paths throughout campus, lighting and roadway crossing facilities such as painted crosswalks, signage, pedestrian signals and push buttons. The UW transit system includes a number of shuttle routes and paratransit services that link major activity centers and parking locations. In addition, existing parking lots can be found throughout campus, and there are several opportunities for on street parking along local streets.

**KEY ASSETS**

- There is adequate capacity to accommodate current and future automobiles on the roadway systems that serve the campus and there are no areas of significant congestion.
- The campus bicycle system has the potential to connect the West and East Campuses and overcome a difficult walking distance.
- The majority of sidewalks and pedestrian crossings meet minimum traffic engineering requirements.
- The network of campus shuttles provides a viable alternative to automobiles and the recent refinements to the shuttle system have led to a steady increase in ridership.

**MAJOR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

- Even a small amount of delay or congestion can be perceived as a problem due to the generally low traffic volumes throughout Laramie.
- Increasing bicycle use is resulting in conflict between bicyclists and pedestrians. As a result, bicycle parking, widths of shared bicycle and pedestrian pathways, lighting and crossings all require improvement.
- There are several busy streets limiting safe access throughout campus. Several opportunities exist to enhance pedestrian crossing treatments.
- 15th Street presents a real and perceived barrier between West and Central Campus.
- Few transit connections to downtown or other off-campus destinations are currently available.
- A number of parking spaces are currently underutilized and proximity to campus is a key factor. There is adequate supply, but spaces are not located next to key destinations.
- The lots in East Campus are out-of-direction for efficient use by commuters arriving from the west and a high percentage of commuters are alternatively parking in neighborhoods adjacent to West Campus.
Map 3D  **Existing Transportation**

- Promenade
- Walks and Pathways
- Transit and Pathways
- Transit Route
- Community Bike Route Connection
- Off Campus Shuttle

- Parking
- Bike Rack
- Major Road
- Minor Road
- Campus Boundary

*Source: University of Wyoming*
Map 3E  Existing Parking

Source: University of Wyoming
Existing and potential signage and wayfinding on the University of Wyoming campus includes gateway elements, campus identity and branding, vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle wayfinding, and building identity. UW branding historically includes the university colors (brown and gold) and Steamboat image that serve to brand the University and the State of Wyoming. Many of the older buildings also have names on small sandstone monument signs, or inscribed on the surface of the buildings.

**KEY ASSETS**

- The majority of campus is signed, and individual buildings have been consistently identified with brown painted aluminum panel signs that are easy to read and maintain.
- Monument signs and statues along Grand Avenue help to locate the University and some newer buildings such as the Technology Business Center and the Conference Center.

**MAJOR ISSUES AND CHALLENGES**

- Opportunities to strengthen University identity are missed at arrival points, both entering the City of Laramie and at several campus entry points.
- The campus edge lacks a distinctive design, and there are insufficient markers directing visitors to and from campus.
- Without a signage plan, signs have been added as needed, resulting in a variety of sign shapes, type styles, colors, materials, inconsistent nomenclature and an unclear signage hierarchy.
- There are few campus orientation maps, and building identity signage is relied on to convey information about departments and destinations within particular buildings.
- Signage for the shuttle system is currently very limited, not only for shuttle stops, but routes and schedules as well.
- The larger size and font of signs for auto oriented uses could facilitate increased speeds.
Services and infrastructure on the UW campus include potable water and raw water for irrigation, sanitary sewers, electricity, steam, chilled water, gas, compressed air, and the stormwater system. Potable water is provided by the City of Laramie. The sanitary sewers are also provided by the City outside of the campus borders. Stormwater on-campus is collected and discharged through the municipal storm sewer system. The West Campus purchases electricity from Rocky Mountain Power. A small, photovoltaic array has been installed to the south of the Indoor Practice Facility. The campus uses a Central Energy Plant (CEP) that produces steam heat, chilled water, and compressed air. The steam boilers can be fired using coal, natural gas or oil, and connect to campus through over five miles of tunnels. Natural gas on-campus is distributed to individual housing areas (metered by housing unit), laboratory uses, a few boilers in outlying buildings and incinerators around campus.

**Key Assets**

- The UW campus has numerous wells to provide irrigation of the campus.
- The University of Wyoming supplies its own raw water. The City’s restriction program to reduce irrigation use during times of drought does not apply to the University’s raw water supply.
- The Laramie Comprehensive Plan (2007) indicates a water base capacity able to serve roughly twice the current demand.
- The University is currently undergoing a Utilities Master Plan planning effort.

**Major Issues and Challenges**

- Additional boiler capacity is likely necessary to significantly increase distribution of the steam system.
- Additional chillers would have to be installed to increase the production of chilled water.
- The cost of extending tunnels and piping systems to East Campus will need to be analyzed against the possible savings in heating and cooling costs of using the steam system.
- Consolidation and rerouting of natural gas mains may be required with development of the East Campus.
Sustainability is an underlying priority throughout the long range development planning process, and can be evaluated by considering the constellation of energy and resource uses that maintain the campus.

**Key Assets**

- UW has access to an abundance of natural resources from coal and natural gas to wind and solar.
- Energy assets at the University include recent upgrades in efficiency to the Central Energy Plant (CEP) and individual buildings which has kept coal and gas use on-campus relatively constant for the past two decades despite new building construction.
- The campus has established standards of performance in design as well as energy and water consumption by adopting the requirement that all new construction and major renovation will strive to meet LEED® Silver standards.
- The campus has sustainable purchasing requirements and a database that includes extensive information on available sustainable materials and products.
- An existing social asset on-campus is the interest in sustainable practices such as organic, fair trade coffee and re-usable mugs; corn-based compostable containers; an effort to compost food scraps; and the recycling program.

**Major Issues and Challenges**

- Renewable energy does not make a significant contribution to electrical use, and despite upgrades, electricity consumption has increased dramatically in the past two decades.
- Although natural gas is the cleanest burning fossil fuel, and the CEP is capable of burning natural gas exclusively, it currently is not the primary fuel used for heating the main part of campus.
- There are no requirements for existing buildings to meet LEED® EB standards or their equivalent.
- Some potable water is currently being used for irrigation.
The University has an abundance of development opportunities to accommodate future growth on-campus. These opportunities exist on both University owned and non-University owned property. Existing development potential on the UW campus includes infill, expansion, redevelopment and new development.
Map 3F **Opportunity Areas**

Opportunity Areas

- **A** North of Lewis
- **B** South of Madison
- **C** Service & Maintenance
- **D** West Willet
- **E** Crane-Hill
- **F** Research/Business
- **G** Central Campus Academic (LCCC and other academic partners)

Parking Lot

- **H** Stadium Parking Lot
- **I** Grand Ave Commercial
- **J** Rocky Mountain Station
- **K** West Summit View
- **L** East Summit View
- **M** Armory

Source: University of Wyoming
On West Campus, the most significant future development opportunities involve expanding the existing campus boundaries south of Ivinson Avenue and north of Lewis Street. Property acquisitions and redevelopment plans along Lewis Street create an opportunity to redefine the northern edge of West Campus. Similarly, property acquisitions between Ivinson Street and Grand Avenue provide the University with an opportunity to redefine a public edge along Grand Avenue. Beyond what is currently included in the Capital Facilities Plan, further development on West Campus will likely require additional property acquisition and assembly.
The 15th Street corridor continues to pose a significant challenge to linking Central and East Campuses with West Campus. High traffic volumes and speeds coupled with several locations with limited visibility result in dangerous crossings and an unpleasant pedestrian environment. The division created by traffic on 15th Street is amplified by the Greenhill Cemetery. Academic and research facilities that have developed east of the cemetery and Fraternity Mall are isolated from the academic and research core of campus. In addition, travel distances for students between East and West Campuses can be challenging within the current ten-minute break between classes.

There is ample opportunity to expand the Wyoming Technology Business Center and/or develop new uses near this location that complement this very successful venture. In addition, five relatively large parking lots surrounding the Corbett Facility and the Fine Arts Center provide potential development opportunities in this area of campus. However, redevelopment of additional parking lots may begin to put a strain on the parking supply and the University’s ability to meet demand.
There is significant development potential on East Campus including both redevelopment and new development opportunities. One of the major drivers of the current planning effort involves the Summit View Apartments southeast of the 22nd Street and Willett Drive intersection. Many stakeholders have identified the “barracks” as an eyesore that is outdated and inadequate in meeting the needs of existing and potential residents.

The intersection of Harney Street and 22nd Street provides a unique opportunity as it is the only intersection on-campus that is completely undeveloped. University land holdings extend east to 45th Street, but development potential east of Jacoby Golf Course is limited due to City restrictions related to the underlying aquifer and drainage.