



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER

MICRO MASTER PLAN

MARCH 2009
REGENT APPROVAL

RNL

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Project Area

There have been profound changes to the vision for the Auraria Campus in the past few years. A number of concurrent planning processes including most significantly the AHEC Master Plan Update and the Downtown Area Plan have called for a stronger integration between the campus and downtown. This is a fundamentally different approach than the previous master plan in which the campus was conceived as an isolated island from its surroundings. Another profound change in the AHEC Master Plan Update is the concept of ‘neighborhoods’ for each of the institutions on the Auraria Campus.

To address these changes, the University of Colorado Denver has undergone a Micro Master Plan to give definition to its concept of the neighborhood. Unlike the other institutions at the Auraria Campus, UC Denver also has a significant presence in the downtown including Lawrence Street Center and the Dravo Building. This presence has recently been expanded with the purchase of the building at 1475 Lawrence for the Business School. UC Denver has a unique situation because of having programs and offices in both the campus and downtown Denver. This is complicated by the fact that Speer Boulevard creates a difficult barrier that separates the campus from downtown Denver and makes for a dangerous crossing for pedestrians.

Another important change that would have a significant impact on the UC Denver Neighborhood is the creation of a major mixed-use development on the area at the corner of Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway, currently inhabited by the ball fields. This could create a high-density commercial district with retail, hotel, and residential uses all adjacent to the area identified for the UC Denver Neighborhood. The new Hotel Learning Center proposed at the corner of

Speer Boulevard and Auraria Parkway by Metro State is the first phase of this new mixed use district.

The goal of this Micro Master Plan for UC Denver is to address these disparate issues and arrive at a cohesive and coordinated approach for the future development of the university. The Concept Plan was created through multiple work sessions with the staff and leadership of the University. It now needs to be discussed widely by all the university constituencies.

The Concept Plan has the following central principles:

1. The Area bridges Speer and includes both the Auraria Campus and Downtown
2. The Area needs to have a distinct identity defined by a special center that acts as the heart of the area.
3. There should be a hierarchy of open spaces that mark the UC Denver Neighborhood
4. A unique identity needs to be established though the use of gateways and landmarks.
5. Important views and axes should be respected and reinforced through the development of the plan.

These principles create a framework for growth and change that will give a unique and identifiable character that builds on the unique attributes of UC Denver.



Existing Context

1. BACKGROUND

There are many existing conditions that affect the development of the plan both within the Auraria campus and downtown Denver. There are also a number of concurrent planning processes that affect the district. It is an area of flux and change in many ways.

1.1 Existing Urban Context

The city of Denver is undergoing a steady transformation that is making it denser, more urban and filled with a broader mix of uses. There has been infill of urban housing in the downtown including townhouses, condominiums and high-rise residential projects. New hotels including the Hyatt are making Denver a premier convention and tourist destination. This has been reinforced by new downtown sports venues including Invesco Field, Coors Field and the Pepsi Center. These changes have created a vibrant and active city center with a broad array of restaurants and retail uses.

The Auraria Campus is surrounded by large roads including Speer Boulevard, Auraria Parkway and Cofax Ave. These roads carry heavy traffic volumes at high speeds and thus act as dividers that isolate the campus from downtown. They are dangerous for pedestrians to cross and create discontinuous and limited vehicular access.

Cherry Creek runs down the center of Speer Parkway and is at least 20' below the road. This creates a pleasant linear park and bike path yet also further separates the campus from the downtown.

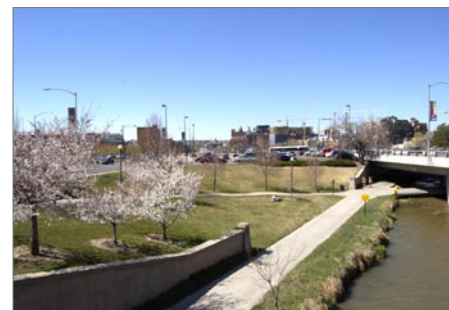
The University of Colorado Denver has a significant presence in downtown Denver including the Dravo Building, the Lawrence Street Center and the newly acquired building



Downtown Denver
View from North Classroom Building



Larimer Street
Looking toward Campus



Cherry Creek
View from Speer Blvd. & Lawrence St.



Dravo Building
View from 15th St. & Lawrence St.



Lawrence Street Center
View from 14th St. & Lawrence St.

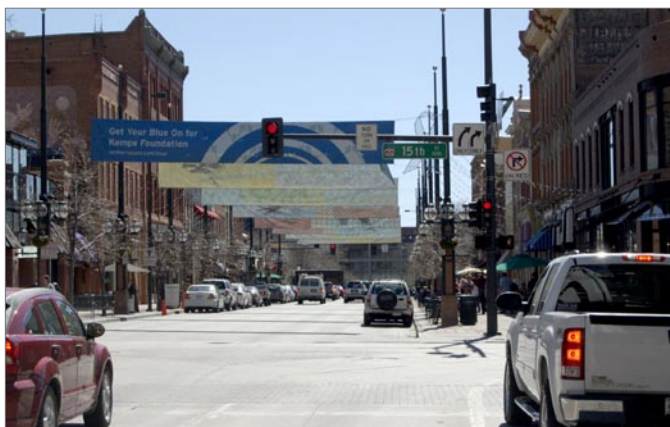


Business School at 1475 Lawrence
View from 15th St. looking north

for the Business School at 1475 Lawrence. There are a number of large projects either under construction or planned in the area around the Dravo Building including the Four Seasons luxury residential tower to the east on 14th and the Bell Park project to the north.

Speer Boulevard

Speer Boulevard is an 8-lane divided arterial road through most of the area aligning with the AHEC campus to the west. The boulevard is a physical and perceptual barrier to pedestrians travelling from downtown to the campus due to lack of safety, convenience and pedestrian amenities. Buildings located along Speer Boulevard are set back and oriented away from the road. This reinforces a sense of isolation in this auto-dominated environment and unfriendly and discontinuous urban areas. The new Science Building begins a change in attitude by its design close to Speer Boulevard. However, the crossing of Speer Boulevard by pedestrians remains a significant issue to be addressed.



Larimer Square
View from 15th St. looking toward campus



Speer Boulevard

Larimer Street/ Lawrence Street

Larimer Street is the main spine connecting the campus to the downtown with the highest pedestrian use. Larimer Street is the important axis off the campus with Larimer Square with its active retail uses serving as the heart of pedestrian activity. The street has strong use on campus but mainly as a link to Tivoli and Lawrence. Lawrence Way is the most significant east-west connection on the campus but it provides complicated crossings at Speer Boulevard restricting its accessibility and connections to the downtown. This is reinforced by the lack of activities on Lawrence Street in the downtown area.



Larimer Street, AHEC Campus



Lawrence Street, AHEC Campus

Existing Campus Conditions



UC Denver Existing Buildings

AHEC Existing Buildings



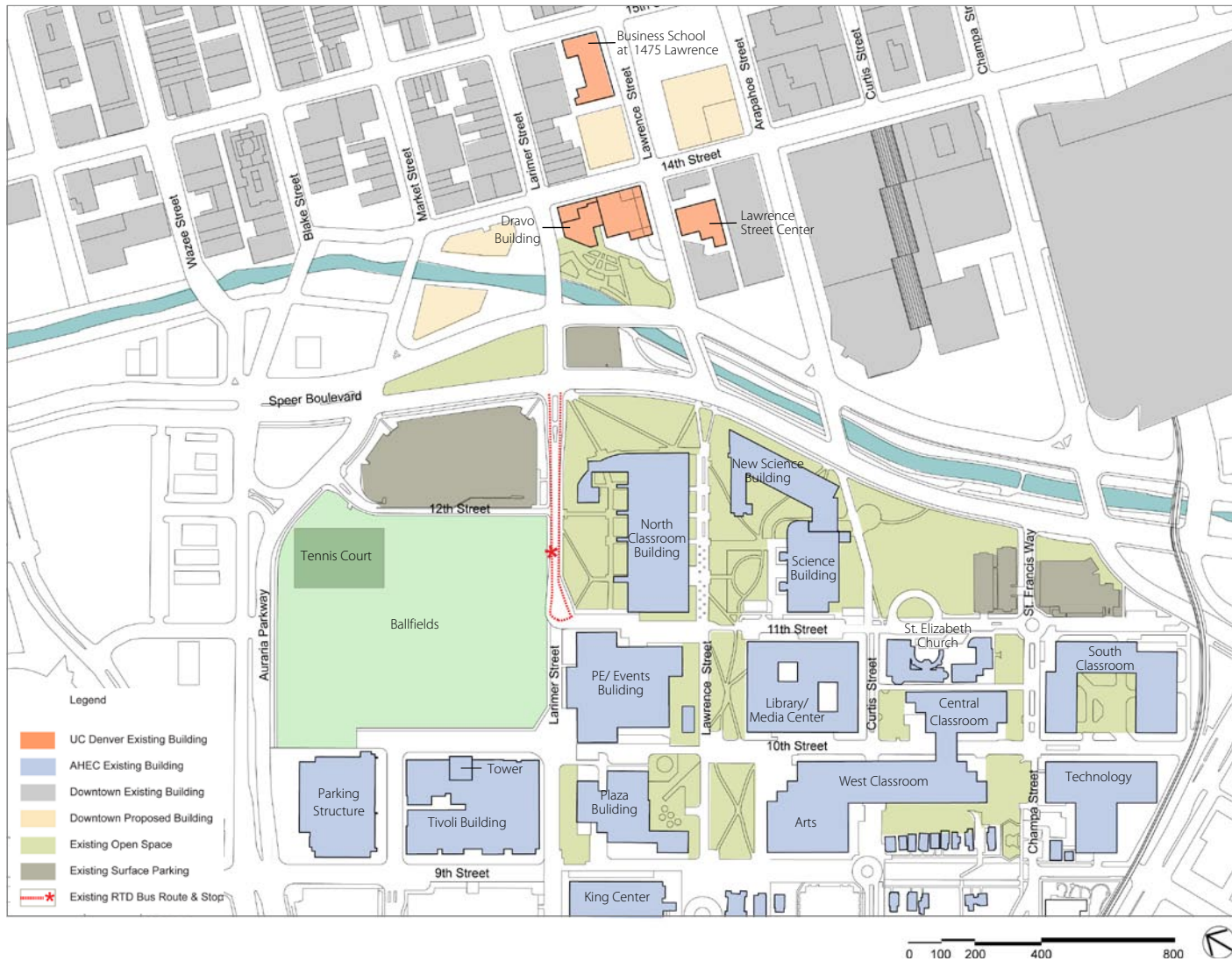
There are three UC Denver properties (1475 Lawrence, Dravo Building and Lawrence Street Center) that are located on Lawrence Street in downtown. This creates an opportunity for Lawrence Street to function as a pedestrian spine for UC Denver in both downtown and the AHEC campus. This study also revealed that eastbound pedestrian traffic on Lawrence Street tends to cross at Lawrence Street while westbound pedestrians travelling from downtown to the campus cross at Larimer Street. This can be another important factor to suggest both Larimer and Lawrence Streets as enhanced primary connections to the campus promoting a dual gateway rather than a singular one.

1.2 Existing Campus

The existing Auraria Campus is based on planning principles put into place in the 1970's and 80's. The campus is administered by the Auraria Higher Education Center (AHEC) and houses the Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University and the University of Colorado Denver. UC Denver also has a significant medical campus in Aurora at the Anschutz Medical Campus at the former Fitzsimmons Army Hospital. At AHEC, there are many shared facilities for all institutions such as classrooms, labs, recreation, student union, etc. There are also many spaces that are specific to each institution including specialized facilities, administrative offices and student services

Auraria was conceived as a suburban campus set back from broad parkways. It replaced a dense urban grid that was eliminated to make way for the campus. It was designed on a 30'x30' grid to which both the buildings and the overall urban design conformed.

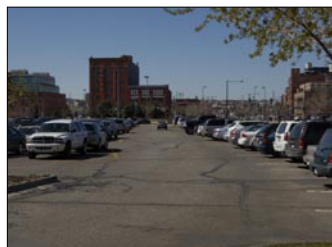
Existing Campus Conditions



The campus was originally designed to be isolated from the surrounding city and function as a commuter campus with large surface lots to serve the significant parking need. Lawrence Way is the major pedestrian spine that unifies the campus. Many of the most significant buildings on campus front on this including the Science Building, North Classroom, Recreation, King Center and the Administration Building. Lawrence has extensive landscaping and forms a linear park through the campus. It connects many other green spaces forming a continuous open space network giving the campus a park-like environment.

The historic Tivoli building is on the north side of the campus, west of the North Classroom Building. This building has had many additions, and renovations and preserves many of the original elements of the original brewery to create a unique character. The Tivoli contains most of the student union uses including the book store, many eateries and the Starz film center. The Tivoli has a tower which is an important landmark for the campus and the city at-large. Just east of the Tivoli are large ballfields and tennis courts that further the separation and isolation from the rest of the City.

Adjacent to the ballfields is a drop-off area for RTD buses on Larimer St. A number of routes terminate here so there is a large cul-de-sac for bus turnaround. Buses are staged here and thus parked for periods of time. Larimer is a major crossing from downtown so there is significant student pedestrian activity due to both the crossing and the bus stop. Despite this activity, this area is unfriendly to pedestrians due to the open character with large distances between land uses.



Surface Parking Lot
View from north of Larimer St.



Lawrence Way, AHEC Campus
looking west



Tivoli Student Union Building
View from Larimer St.



Existing RTD Bus Route
on Larimer St.



North Classroom Building from Speer Blvd. and Larimer St.



Walkway through North Classroom Building



AHEC Master Plan Update 2007

There are two light rail stations that serve the campus: on Colfax and 10th St. and at the west end adjacent to the Administration Building. With the expansion of the light rail system, parking demand has decreased by more than 25% even as enrollment has grown. As FasTracks gets built out in the region, parking demand is forecast to drop even more.

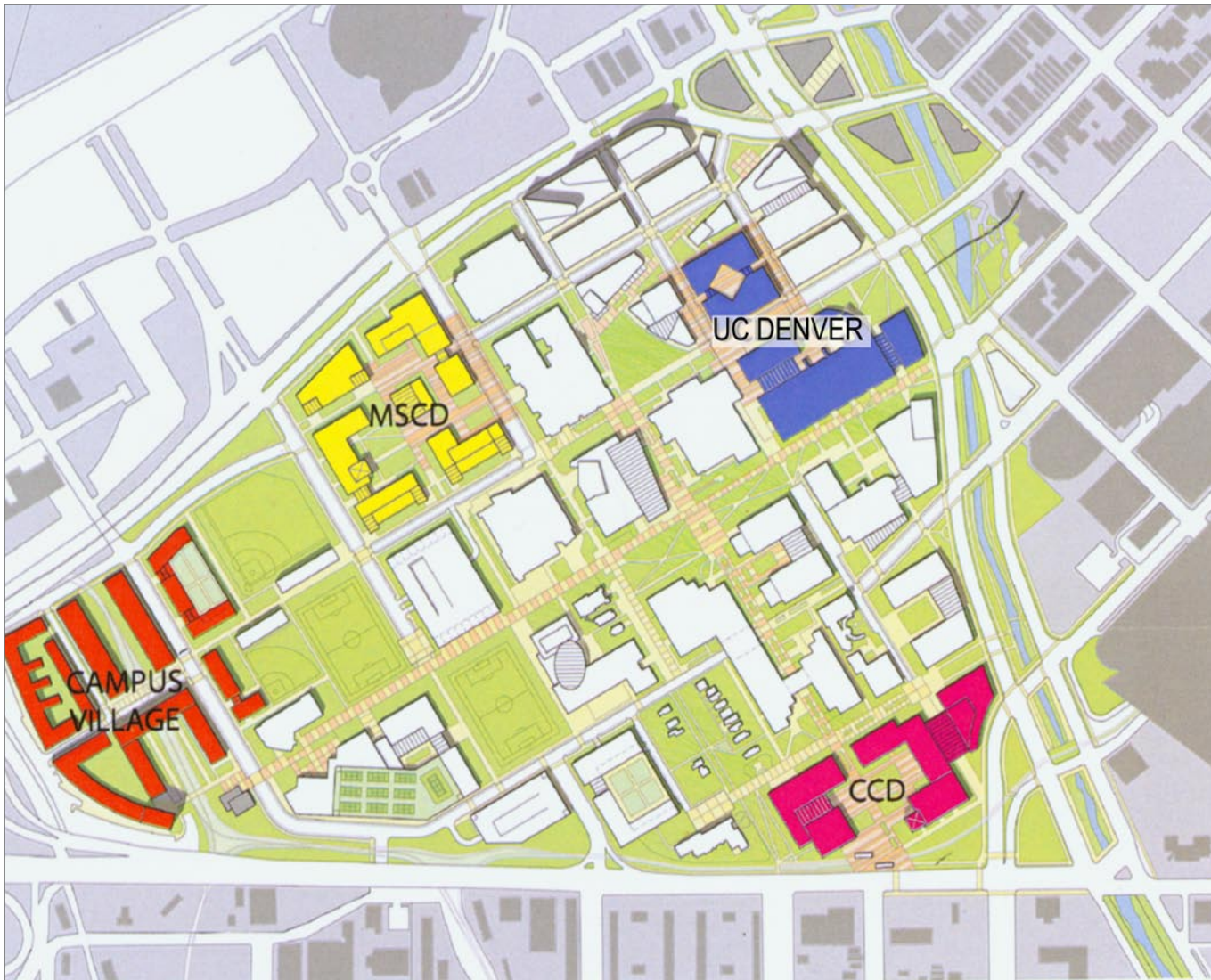
While UC Denver has a significant presence in many buildings on the Auraria Campus, the North Classroom building is the primary focus. It contains both academic and administrative functions. The building was built in the 1980s and its upper floors are currently being renovated. A large clock addresses the axis of Larimer St. These occur at other important building entries as well. The curved façade on Speer Blvd. was actually designed to accommodate a planned curve in Speer that never occurred. Like all the older buildings at Auraria, there is a large grass setback from Speer furthering a sense of separation from Downtown.

1.3 Concurrent Planning Processes

There are many concurrent processes that will have a major affect on the development of the UC Denver Neighborhood. The most significant processes are discussed below:

AURARIA MASTER PLAN UPDATE (June 2007)

AHEC has recently undergone a significant revision to the Campus Master Plan. This was completed by Sasaki and Studio InSite and adopted by the Board in June of 2007. This Master Plan Update proposes a significant new direction for the campus. The campus is meant to now have continuity with the surrounding areas. It is no longer intended to be an isolated campus but instead create linkages to the adjoining neighborhoods. This is particularly true for downtown Denver. The new Science Building is being constructed close to Speer as the first step of this new approach.



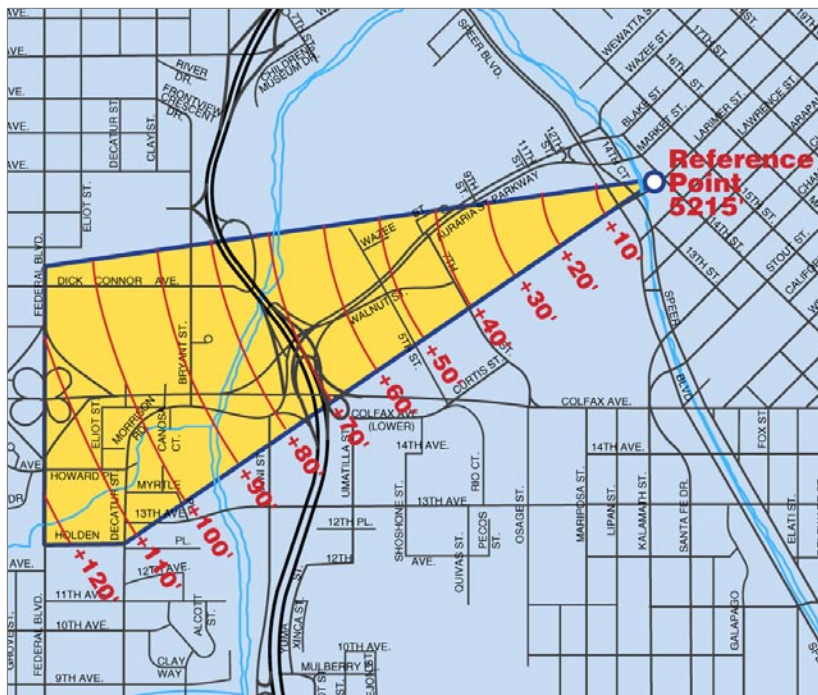
AHEC Master Plan, Institutional Neighborhoods

Another significant change is that each of the three institutions will be conceived as 'neighborhoods' within the context of the larger campus. There will still be many shared resources such as the library, classrooms, performing arts center, student center, and the recreation center but there will be a specific area of the campus dedicated to each institution with a unique identity and sense of place. The area designated for UC Denver Neighborhood is surrounding the North Classroom Building and is the focus of this study.

There are a number of other important changes that are central to the Master Plan Update. Larimer St. is proposed as a second campus spine in addition to Lawrence Way. To achieve this, it is proposed that the large parking garage (the Auraria Transportation Center) be modified to ultimately allow the street to pass through it. This street is planned to link downtown Denver all the way to the new emerging Auraria West District and light rail station on the west edge of campus, perhaps with a streetcar. This will create a new parallel pedestrian connection through campus.

Another notable change put forward by the Master Plan Update is to relocate the ballfields and create a significant mixed use district at the corner of Speer and Auraria to the east of the Tivoli. This would be achieved through a public-private partnership between AHEC and a private developer to be selected through an RFP. This new development will cause a significant change to the perception and use of the campus as well as the connection from Auraria to the downtown. The site at the corner of Speer and Auraria Parkway is currently being proposed for a new hotel sponsored by the hotel school at Metro State.

The Campus Design Guidelines are currently being modified to reflect this new direction in the Master Plan update. These are scheduled to be completed by fall of 2009.



Old City Hall View Plane
(Provided by City and County of Denver, January 2001)



View from 14th & Larimer St. (former site of City Hall)
looking toward Tivoli and Mt. Evans

VIEW PLANE

The City of Denver Old City Hall View Plane has a significant affect on the redevelopment of the area to the east of the Tivoli. The starting point is at the corner of 14th and Larimer and it extends roughly towards the Tivoli. This limits buildings in this area to two and three stories thus severely restricting the development capacity of the site. This could potentially minimize the economic feasibility of this area for private mixed-use development.

The original master plan proposal imagined development in this area unrestricted by the view plane. Subsequent analysis by both AHEC and the Master Plan team arrived at a proposal to narrow the cone of the view plane so that it would focus on preserving views of Mt. Evans and the Tivoli tower. An alternative plan of the mixed-use area was developed to address this modified condition. The modification would allow taller buildings along the north side of Larimer and create the ability for more height on the Auraria Parkway side of the district. This modification would allow more height for the UC Denver building that is on the north side of Larimer.

Modification of the view plane will involve a comprehensive public process. It is anticipated this will occur as part of development process for the new mixed use district.



Option 1A: Modified View Plane & 1,250,000 gsf of mixed use development
(Provided by SASAKI ASSOCIATES, Studio Insite and U3 VENTURES)



Option 1B: Modified View Plane & 1,066,000 gsf of mixed use development



Option 2 : View Plane as is & 995,000 gsf of mixed use development

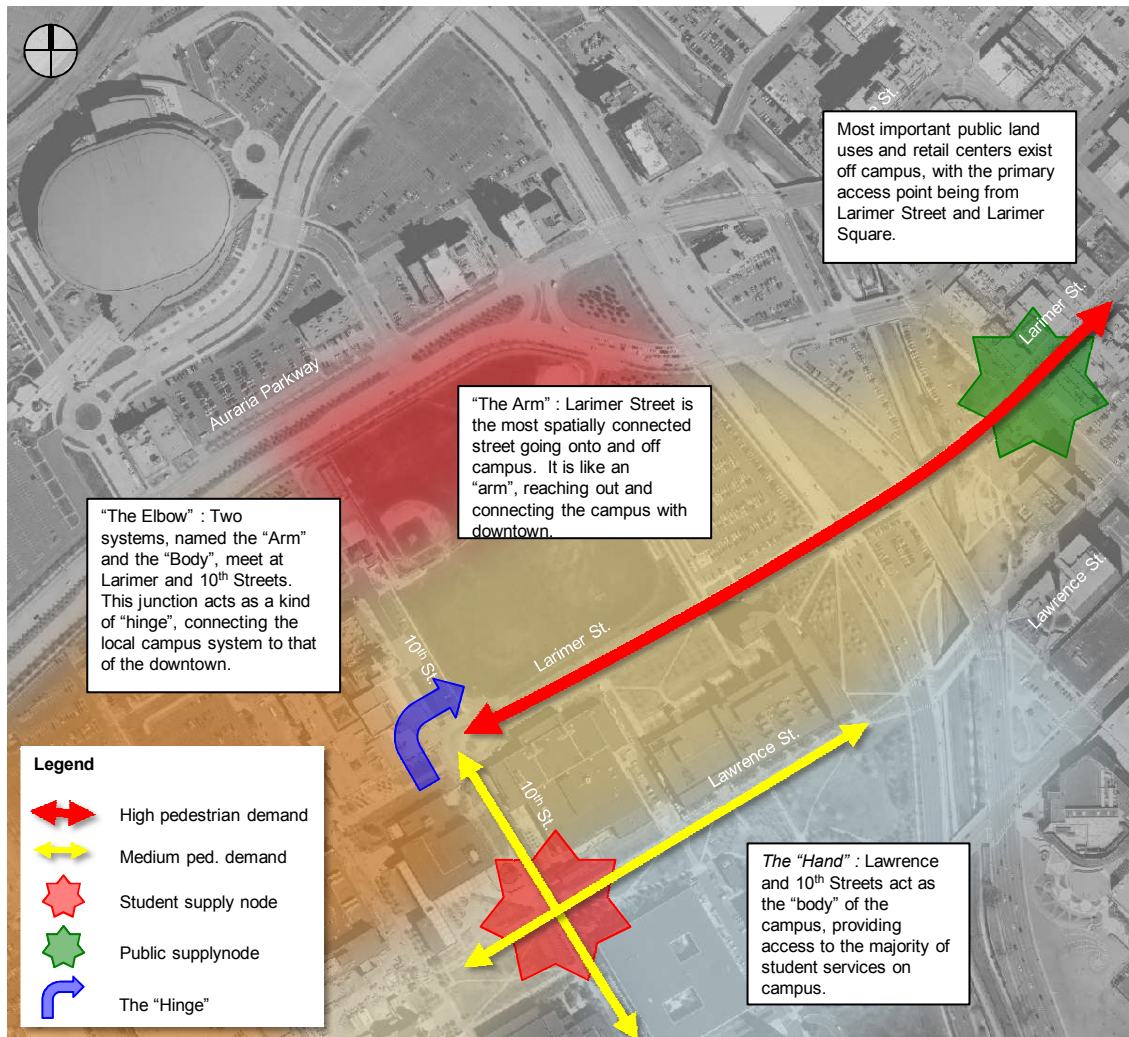
- Legend
- UC Denver Academic Buildings
 - Mixed Use Developments

IMPLICATIONS OF VIEW PLANE ON UC DENVER NEIGHBORHOOD

The following three development options were presented for consideration by Sasaki Associates, Studio Insite and U3 Ventures in December 2007.

Options 1A & B require view plane modification and accommodate 1,040,000 gsf and 1,296,000 gsf of UC Denver Neighborhood buildings and 1,250,000 gsf and 1,066,000 gsf of mixed use development respectively. Option 2 keeps the view plane as per existing Ordinance and provides 1,167,000 gsf of UC Denver development and 995,000 gsf mixed use. For all three options, the proposed heights of the developments located within the view plane are limited to 2-3 stories.

Findings How does the existing campus perform?

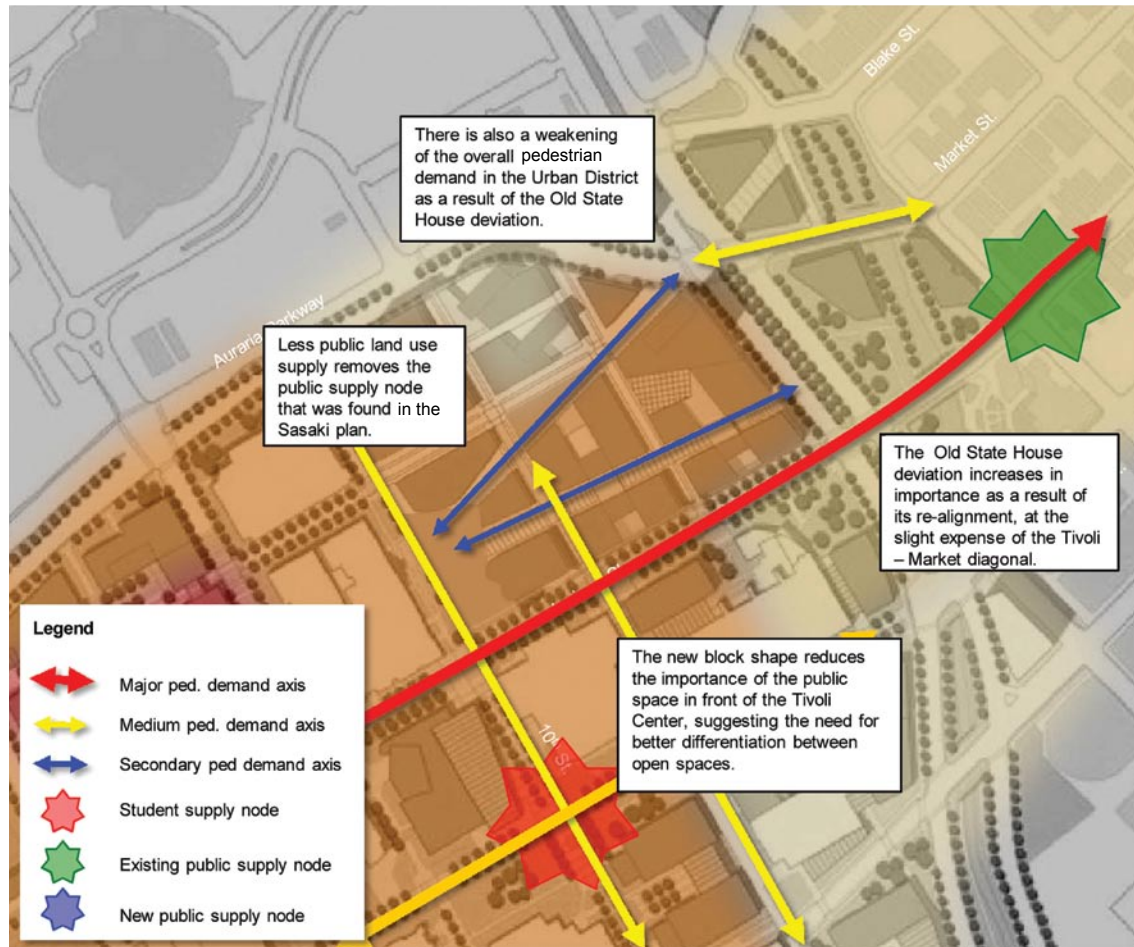


AHEC Master Plan Review by Space Syntax

SPACE SYNTAX ANALYSIS (Spring 2008)

Space Syntax, a London-based pedestrian planning firm conducted an analysis of both the existing conditions on campus and the Mixed Use District as proposed in the Master Plan Update. They found that Larimer is the central pedestrian connection on campus with Lawrence acting as a secondary link. The block between Lawrence and Larimer, between 10th and 11th was identified as a key block on campus. It functions to make the transition between the campus-oriented Lawrence and the main downtown connection on Larimer. Because of the location of the light rail and Tivoli on 10th and the proposed mixed use district, this block may be a focal point for pedestrian activity.

Findings How does the view shed plan perform?



AHEC Master Plan Review by Space Syntax

Space Syntax also analyzed the Mixed Use District plan as proposed in the Master Plan Update and as modified to address the view plane modification. The analysis found that while the diagonal from Wazee to the Tivoli diffused the pedestrian activity of the mixed use district, the proposed diagonal pedestrian way from Larimer Street to the Tivoli was a contributor to the activity of the area. What is key to the area's success is to create a strong physical and visual connection from Larimer Street and Speer Boulevard to the heart of the Mixed Use District.



Auraria Strategy, Downtown Area Plan 2007

DOWNTOWN AREA PLAN (July 2007)

The Downtown Denver Partnership and the City and County of Denver recently completed an update of the Downtown Denver Area Plan. This had concepts that have an important impact on the Auraria campus. Specifically, the plan calls for strengthening the connection between downtown and the campus. This should be done by intensifying campus development near downtown, linking Auraria and downtown by a streetcar on Larimer and transforming Speer to a boulevard that will create a more pedestrian-friendly environment and include improving the pedestrian crossings of Speer.

The Downtown Denver Partnership plans on further studying the urban design of Speer Blvd as it goes through downtown to arrive at a comprehensive approach to the transformation of Speer and its relation to downtown and the Auraria Campus.

The City and County of Denver is currently studying the entire length of Speer Blvd to better understand its potential from a neighborhood and transportation perspective. These studies will affect how Speer is ultimately transformed and how it is configured in the area near the campus and downtown.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO DENVER STRATEGIC PLAN (Feb 15th, 2008)

The Strategic Plan of UC Denver (approved March, 2008) has outlined an overall vision of what the university could look like in 2020 and expressed the values that will guide future development. The Micro Master Plan sought to embody this vision in its work. The main elements of the Strategic Plan are summarized below:

MISSION

UC Denver is a diverse teaching and learning community that creates, discovers and applies knowledge to improve the health and well-being of Colorado and the world.

VISION

By 2020, UC Denver will be a leading public university with a global reputation for excellence in learning, research and creativity, community engagement and clinical care.

VALUES

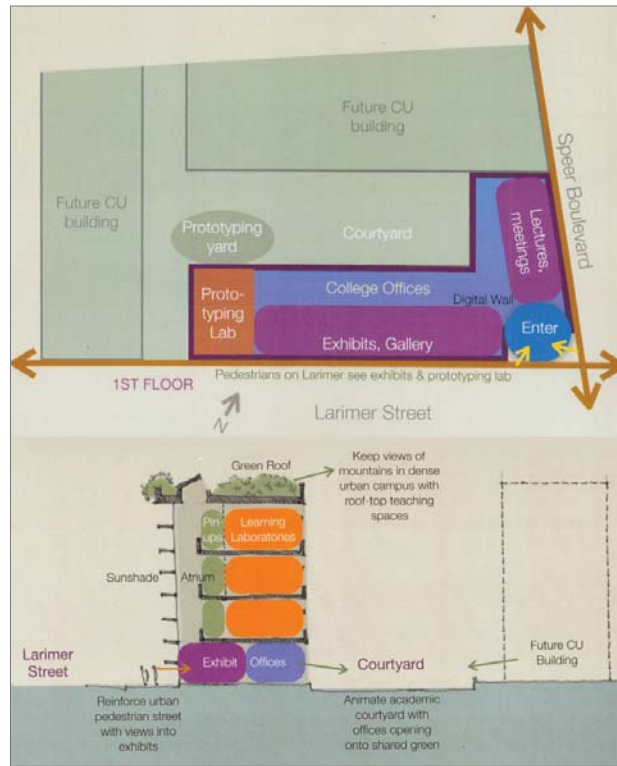
1. Learning and Scholarship UC Denver respects the rigorous quest for knowledge and understanding and fosters student success through a continuous process of inquiry, critical thinking, reflection, collaboration and application.

2. Discovery and Innovation UC Denver fosters an energetic, collaborative and creative environment where we develop and employ new ideas and technologies.

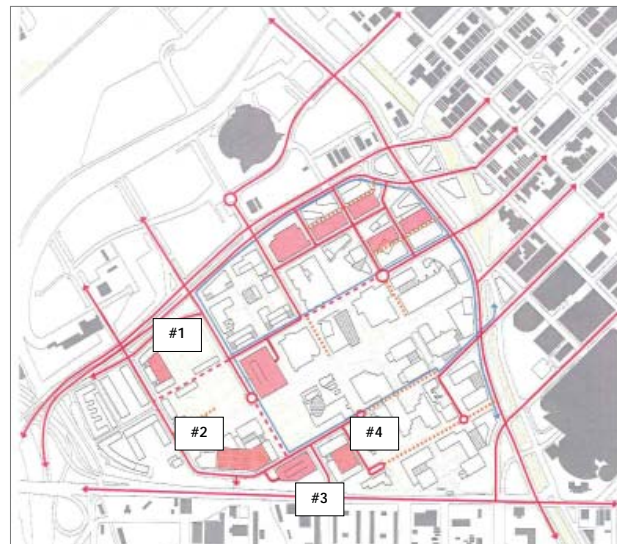
3. Health and Care of Mind, Body and Community UC Denver enriches the well-being and sustainability of communities and our cultural living natural environments. We promote healthy lifestyles and deliver high quality and compassionate health care.

4. Diversity, Respect and Inclusiveness UC Denver seeks the richness that an increasing diversity of our communities brings to our learning, research, and service endeavors.

5. Citizenship and Leadership UC Denver has a recognized source of talent, knowledge, exemplary health care and professional practice. UC Denver is responsible for the resources and should utilize them with integrity for the betterment of the community.



CAP Program Plan



Carl Walker Study showing Potential New Garage Locations

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING BUILDING PROJECT

The College of Architecture and Planning (CAP) is currently planning a new 120,000 gsf building. The Program Plan has been approved by CCE.

CAP is currently located in the Dravo Building on 14th St. but has woefully inadequate space both in quality and quantity. This new building will create a cutting edge building in terms of both design and sustainability that can help further the needs and growth of the College. The program plan proposes a location at the northwest corner of Larimer and Speer with a south site near St. Elizabeth’s as another potential location.

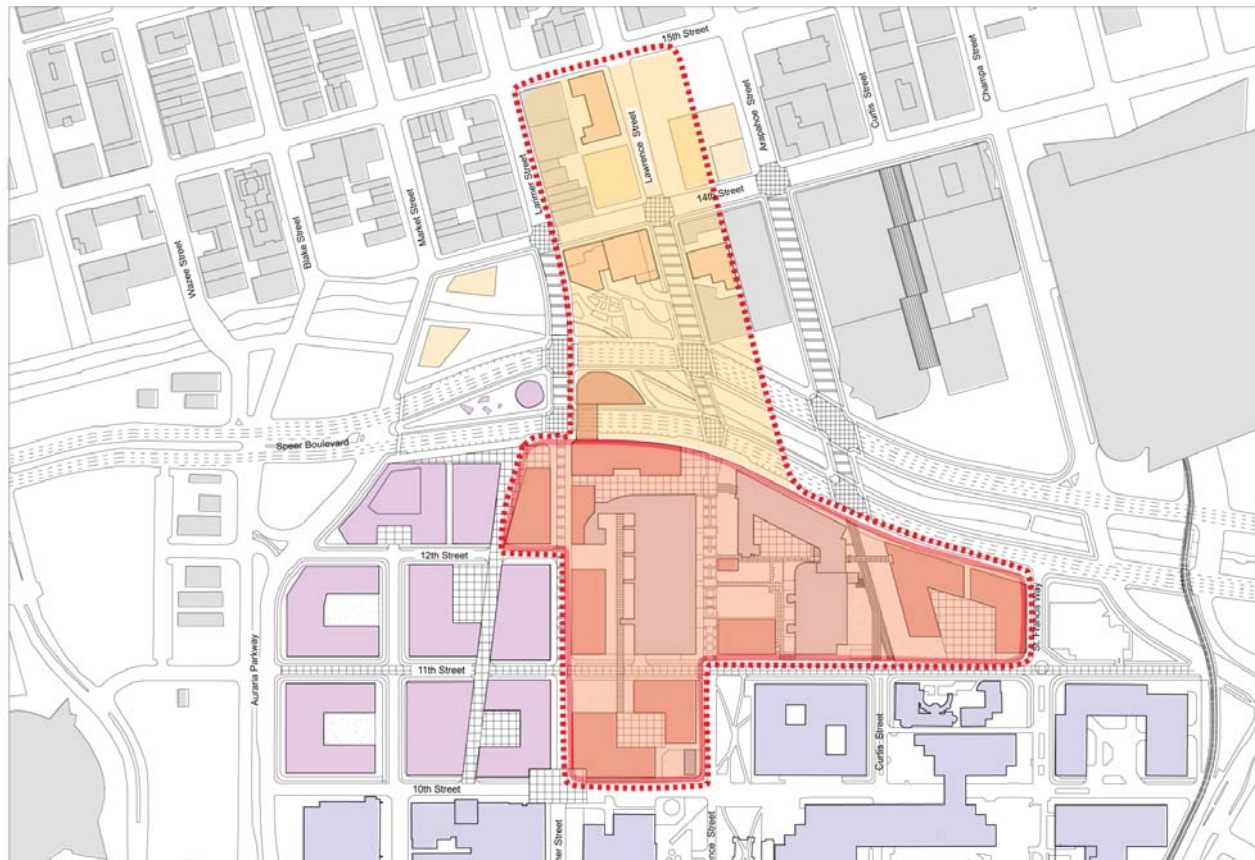
PARKING

Carl Walker completed a parking study of the campus in November of 2007. Parking is the responsibility of AHEC. Walker found that there is currently an 85% utilization of existing off-street parking. There is projected to be future growth of the campus of 2% a year for the next 10 years. There is also projected to be an increase in the utilization of FasTracks from an existing 25% to 30%. There will be a need for about 5700 new spaces by 2020 according to Walker’s calculation. This could be addressed by building new garages and a shuttle using existing under-utilized lots such as Invesco Field. The numbers shown in the plan to the left represent four different alternative locations for the potential new parking structures and they are numbered for identifications purposes only and not in the order of any priority. These locations are proposed on the west and southern perimeter of the campus in order to ensure that pedestrian-vehicular conflicts are minimized on the pedestrian core of the campus. This parking demand does not include the mixed-use districts which will be assumed to be self-sufficient.

INFRASTRUCTURE

All buildings on the Auraria Campus are connected to infrastructure individually. At the present time there is not an integrated infrastructure system or plan for the campus. This includes power, gas, water, chilled water, steam, sewer and stormwater. Each building has an individual approach and connects to the appropriate utility. Currently, AHEC Facilities are documenting the current infrastructure of each building and coordinating with a campus-wide GIS system. There is not currently a plan in place to provide for the increased infrastructure needs as shown in the Master Plan Update. This will be an ongoing process to transition from an individual to a campus-wide system.

UC Denver Area/ Neighborhood



UC Denver Area
 UC Denver Neighborhood at AHEC

2. UC DENVER AREA CONCEPTS
2.1 UC Denver Concept Plan

UC Denver Area: In the City and a Campus

The UC Denver Area incorporates land both on the AHEC Campus and in the city of Denver. On AHEC, there is a distinct UC Denver Neighborhood as one of the discrete institutional neighborhoods, defined in the Master Plan Update. It has edges around a proposed central quad and unique gateway elements. However, the UC Denver Area extends beyond the campus to include the buildings in the city. The concept plan creates an overall vision to define both the entire area and UC Denver Neighborhood at AHEC.

The Concept Plan has been developed to create a clear identity for the UC Denver 'Neighborhood'. This will provide a context for growth to 2020 and beyond. It is assumed that about 1.3 million sf of space would be added in this timeframe.

In establishing an urban design approach, the project team identified a number of unique attributes of the UC Denver campus that contribute to the identity, quality and character of the place. The following have been identified as the campus attributes and values to be retained and enhanced:

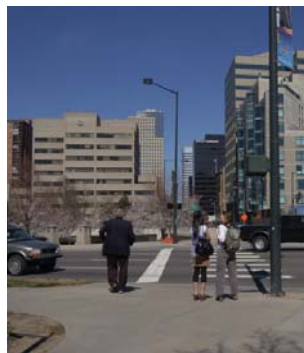
1. UC Denver is a major research university and a part of the University of Colorado system. It attracts students nationally and internationally.
2. UC Denver has research, professional and graduate programs.
3. UC Denver is embedded in the city and should capitalize on its vibrant metropolitan location.
4. UC Denver has direct access to Cherry Creek as an amenity.



University of Colorado System



Research & Professional Programs



UC Denver in the City Location



Access to Cherry Creek

2.2 Design Principles

After analyzing the existing context, concurrent planning processes, and the university needs and goals discussed above, the design team developed a concept for the UC Denver Neighborhood based on the following principles:

1. UC Denver Area:

Create a distinctive identity for the UC Denver Area that is linked to both the campus and the downtown.



2. Open Space:

Provide a hierarchy of open spaces with clear gateways and a center for the neighborhood.



3. Landmarks:

Create landmarks and distinct spaces that promote a sense of identity for the neighborhood.



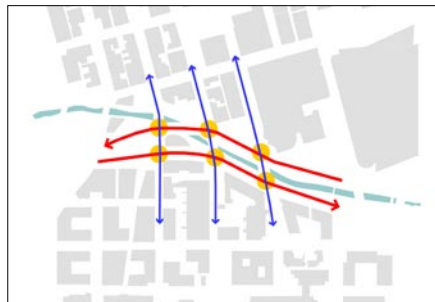
4. Larimer & Lawrence Streets:

Reinforce Larimer and Lawrence Streets as the backbones of the neighborhood both on campus and in downtown Denver.



5. Speer Boulevard:

Transform Speer Boulevard from a parkway to a city street. Improve the pedestrian connections on Larimer, Lawrence and Arapahoe Streets across Speer from the downtown to the campus.



6. Mixed Use District Edge:

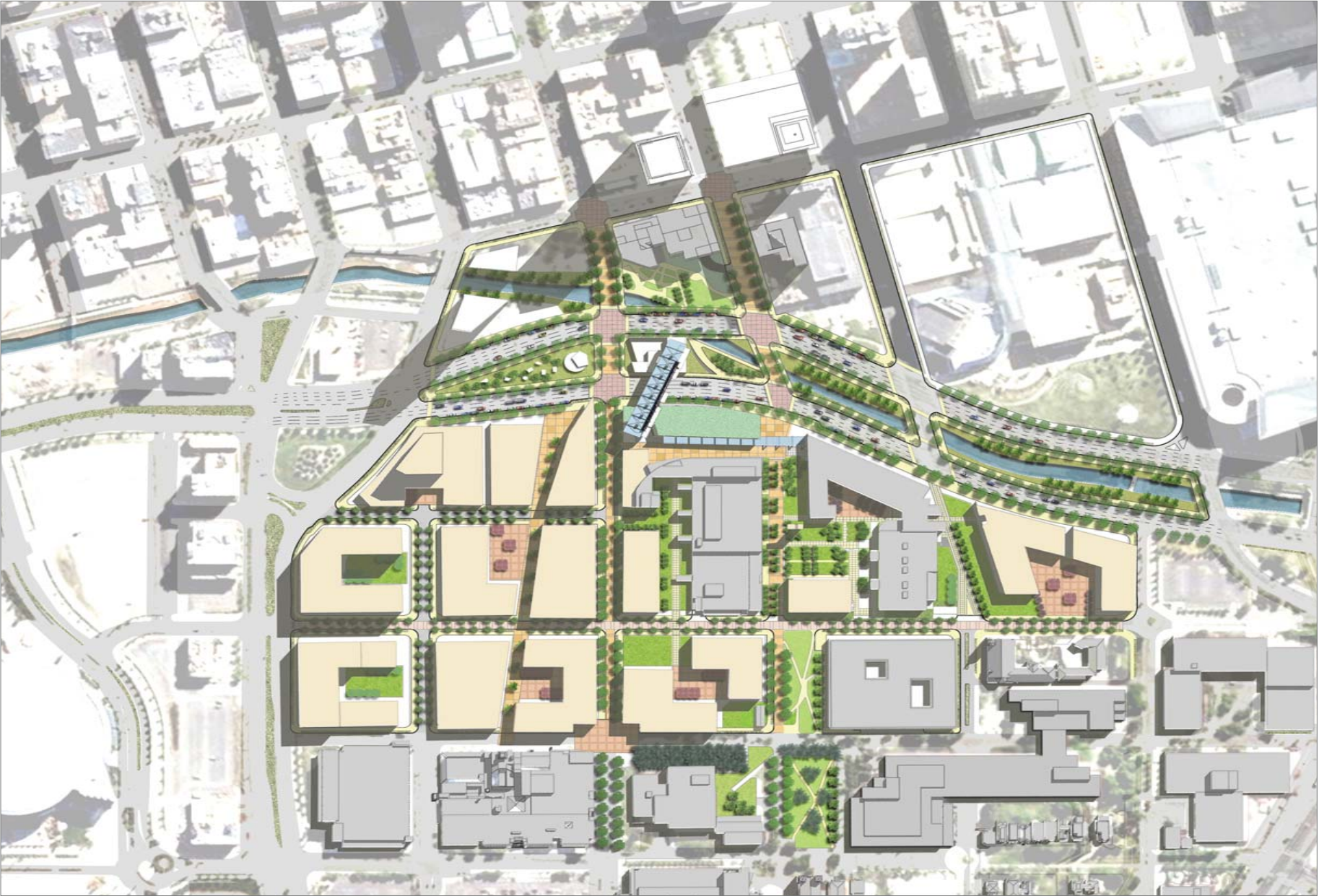
Create both a clear boundary and a strong integration with the UC Denver Neighborhood and the proposed mixed use district.



7. Views and Axes:

Respect significant views and axes in the district including the Tivoli building, Mt Evans, St. Elizabeth's Church and views down Larimer and Lawrence Streets as well as the Old City Hall View Plane.



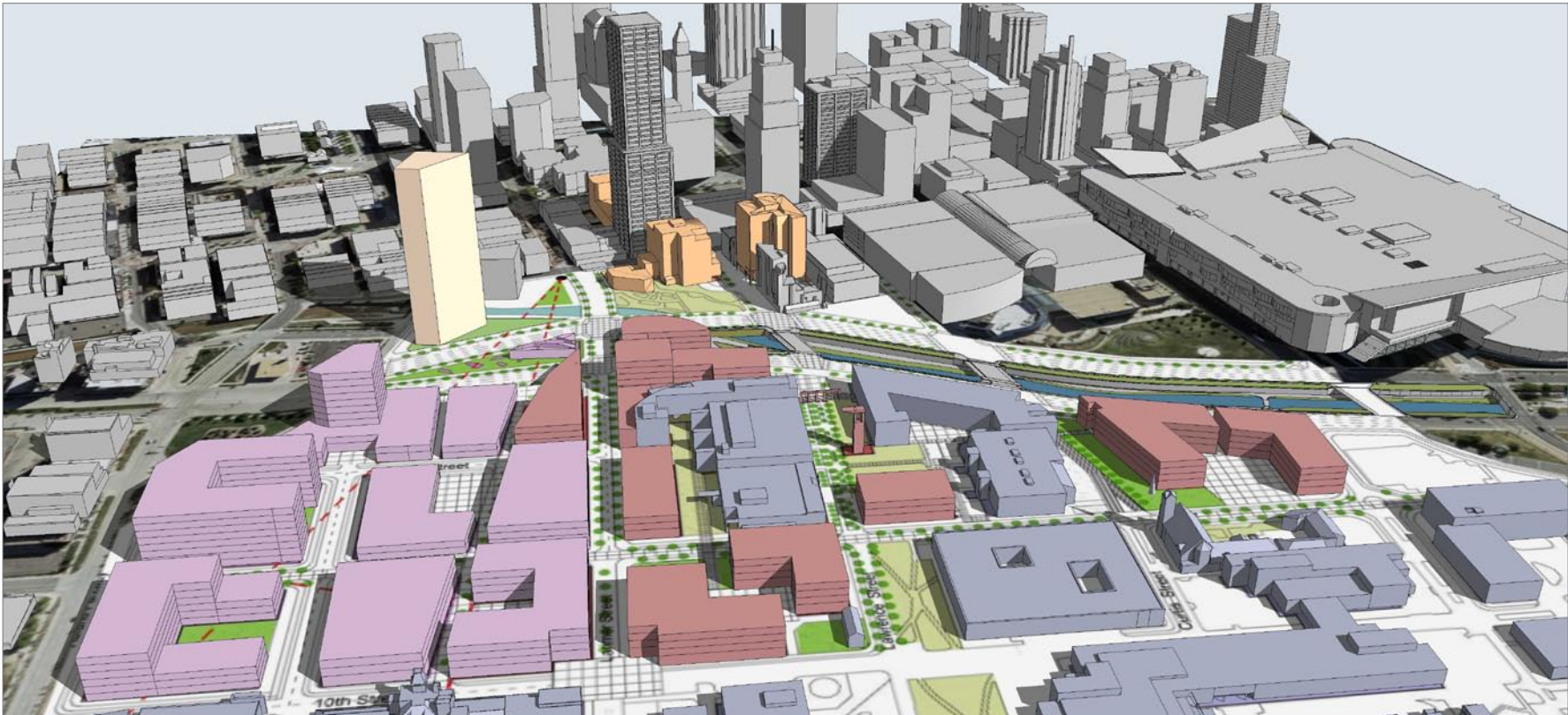


CONCEPT PLAN



Legend

- UC Denver Existing Buildings
- AHEC Existing Buildings
- Downtown Existing Buildings
- UC Denver Proposed Buildings
- Potential Future Mixed Use Buildings
- New/ Future Downtown Buildings
- Existing Green/ Open Space
- Proposed Open Space



Aerial view looking east



Aerial view looking north



Aerial view looking south

UC Denver Area/ Mixed Use District

2.3 Concept Plan Elements

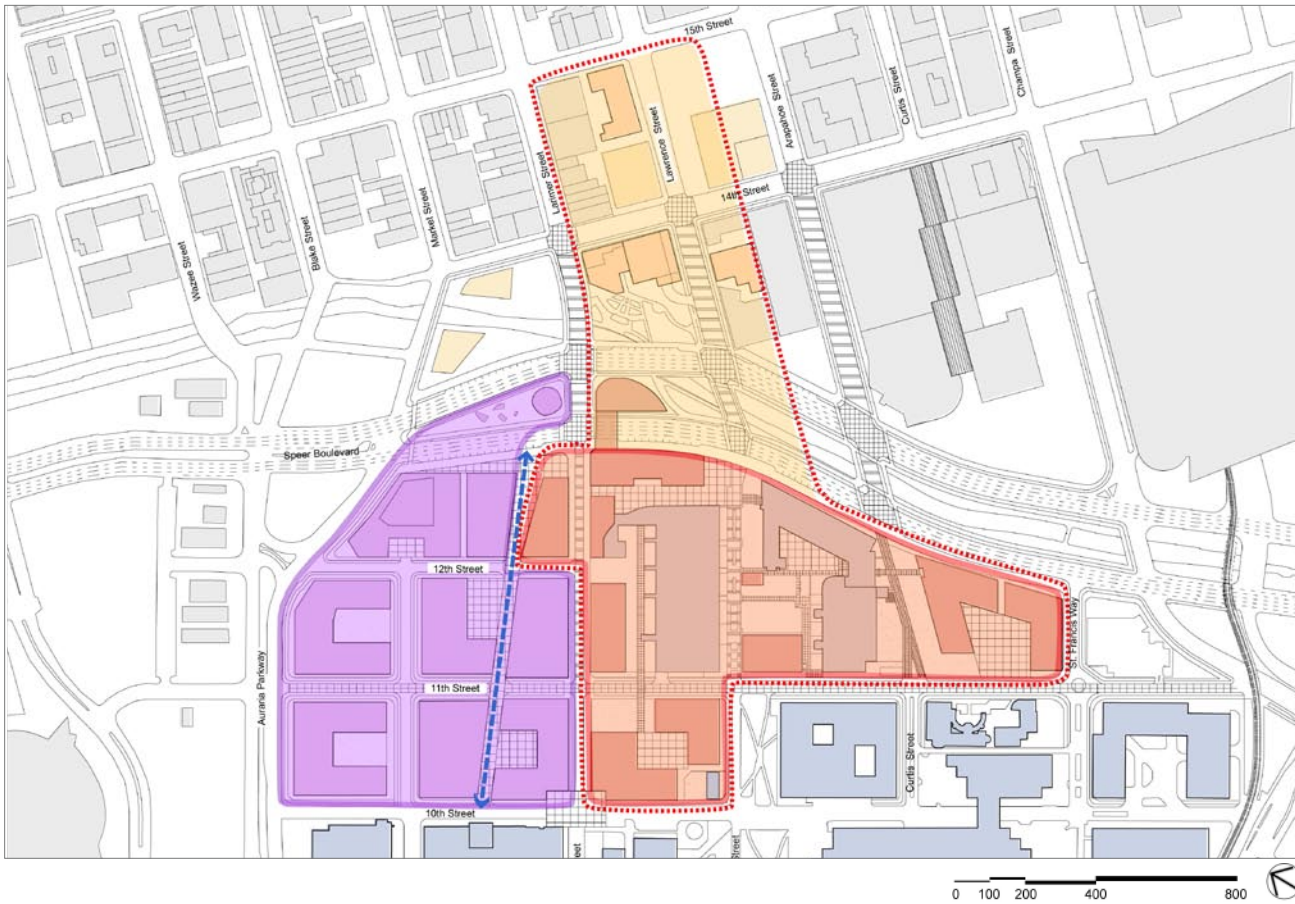
The Concept Plan was developed to achieve the principles outlined above. It can be broken down into the following elements that support the urban design principles.

- UC Denver Neighborhood/ Mixed Use District
- Campus-City Connection
- Pedestrian Connections and Environment
- Hierarchy of Open Spaces
- Vehicular Circulation
- Landmarks and Gateways
- View and Axes

UC Denver Neighborhood/ Mixed Use District

The two areas—one academic and one private sector—will be intimately related to gain the maximum benefit of the student population activating the retail, restaurant and entertainment environment along the diagonal walkway leading to the Tivoli building. The diagonal walkway, based on a proposed modified view plan, supplements the clear extension of Larimer Street, provides a strong visual and physical connection between the Downtown and the center of the campus/mixed use district. It will be a center of activity that will create a high quality public realm for pedestrians

While Larimer Street west of Speer could provide convenience retail use at street level such as cafes, restaurants, book store and other active uses, the diagonal walkway will have an intensified level of retail such as galleries, clothing stores, boutiques and theatres. This would enliven both the campus and the mixed use district, and encourage the mixing of the academic and commercial activities which is critical to creating a true integration of the two areas, as well as creating a sense of place that is urban and exciting. Rather than being a dividing boundary between city and academia, the walkway will play the role of theatre stage, where activities through an extended day and evening will create a safe, lively and inviting venue for visitors and students as well as downtown employees and residents.



View to the east



Walkway to the Tivoli



Campus-City Connection: Transformation of Speer Boulevard



The Campus-City Connection: Transformation of Speer Boulevard

The most important area to enhance the pedestrian connection between downtown and Auraria is Speer Boulevard. The plan proposes transforming Speer in a number of ways to create a zone of pedestrian safety and activity. The first approach is to slow traffic along Speer Boulevard particularly between Auraria Parkway and Champa Street. Introducing slow moving traffic will enhance pedestrian safety and create a ‘village’ feel when approaching the campus from either direction of Speer Boulevard.

On-Street Parallel Parking

The plan also proposes on-street parallel parking on Speer Boulevard between Market Street and Arapahoe Street by adding lanes on both sides. This will slow down traffic and make the area more pedestrian friendly. By adding wide sidewalks and street trees, uses such as cafes and building entrances could then actually face on to Speer.

Improved Pedestrian Crossings

Another strategy to minimize Speer as a divide between campus and the city is to improve the pedestrian crossings of Speer. Since the existing intersections of Larimer/ Lawrence and Speer Boulevard have high potential for pedestrian-vehicle conflicts, the crosswalks at the intersections of those streets could be raised and treated with special paving materials. The raised crosswalk at the intersections and crossings would give pedestrians a continuous walking surface. They would also calm traffic and make pedestrians more visible to approaching drivers. This coupled with the slowing of Speer and buildings on the islands will create a safe and dynamic pedestrian experience that links AHCC to downtown Denver.



Transformed Speer Boulevard looking south to new Bridge Building



Reference: Bridge building -Pontevecchio, Florence, Italy



Location Map

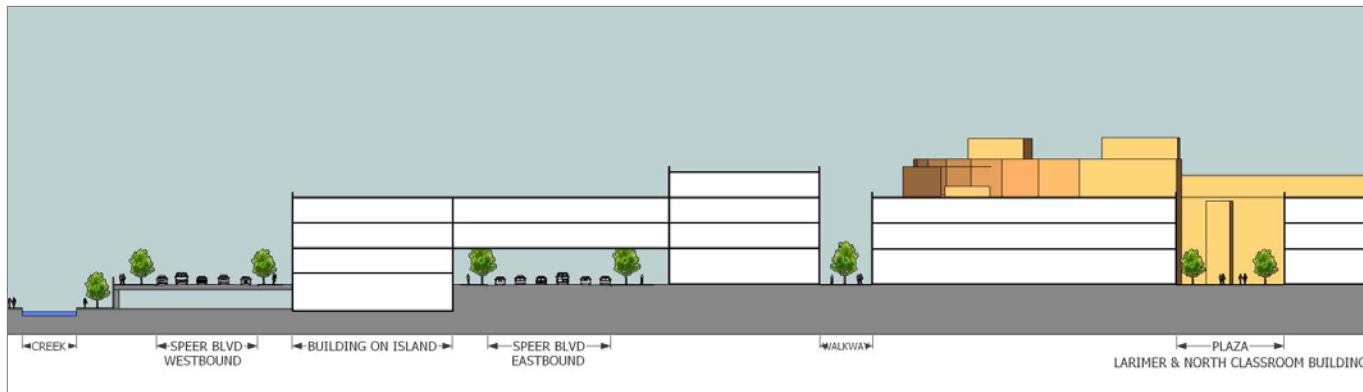
Building on Islands

To patch the disrupted urban fabric of Speer, it is important to fill in the gaps between 15th Street and the Auraria campus. The Concept Plan proposes development on the islands of Speer Blvd. between the east and west travel lanes. This will create a pedestrian interest for downtown users and students/ visitors for the campus and enhance connectivity and accessibility. It is important to note that this land is currently owned by the City and County of Denver.

It is also proposed to build a living bridge at the second floor level over Speer Boulevard between new construction on the island on the south side of Larimer and a new building on the east of the North Classroom Building. The bridge could be several stories tall and have uses such as classrooms and offices. It would overlook Speer Boulevard thus creating a strong gateway for those entering Denver on Speer from I-25. It could also be an iconic building and act as a landmark for UC Denver creating a physical link to support the metaphorical concept of the neighborhood 'bridging Speer'

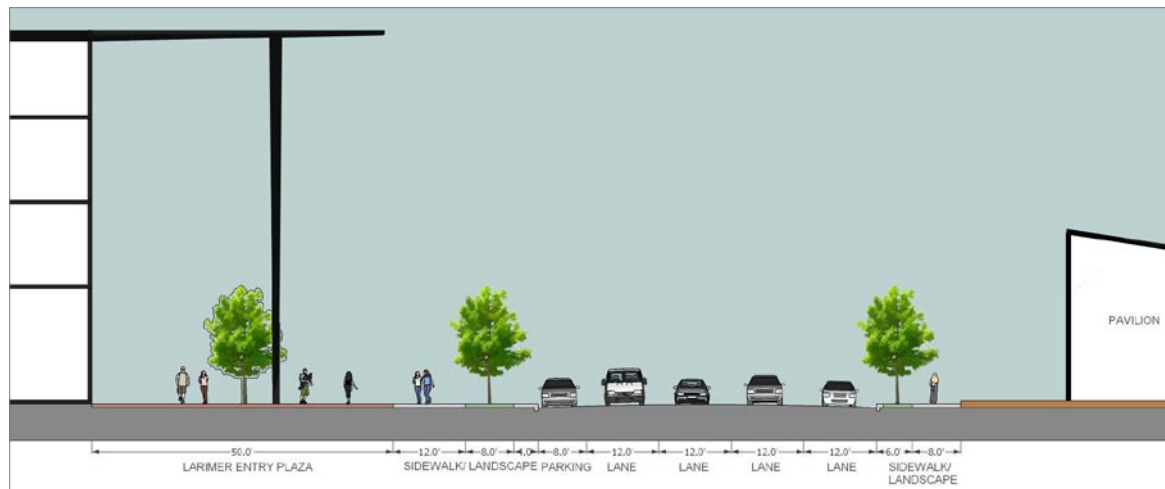
On the island on the north side of Larimer in what is now a grass space, there could be a pavilion housing changing exhibitions and sculpture or other pedestrian/campus oriented uses that could engage and educate passers-by.

An option to explore is to increase the size of the islands to create a larger block size and thus optimize new development. This could best be achieved by moving southbound Speer to the west. This would decrease the size of the mixed-use district slightly and so would need to be coordinated with the City and AHEC in context with the mixed-use development on campus.



Section A - A

Speer Boulevard Section looking south



Section B - B

Speer Boulevard Section looking north

Pedestrian Circulation



Pedestrian Connections & Environment

It is critical to create a connected and continuous pedestrian network in the area. There are a number of approaches to achieving this.

Larimer/ Lawrence Streets

Larimer and Lawrence Streets provide main pedestrian connections to the campus, both serving as important spines to downtown and within the campus. Larimer Street on the campus will be characterized by a strongly defined street edge by the proposed developments built right up against the property lines. This street character will create an 'Urban Street Campus' enhancing the pedestrian experience and connections.

11th Street Pedestrian Way

Currently, 11th Street functions as a service alley for the existing buildings which have main entrances on other streets. The vision is to activate the street creating a high-quality pedestrian environment. The public realm along 11th Street will be improved through paving, planting and street furniture. While 11th Street will maintain the service role for the existing buildings, loading bays and site storage will be appropriately screened through landscaping or walls to soften the visual impact. Service will become a secondary function of 11th Street. High quality public space will also be proposed along the street that supports pedestrian use.

Pedestrian Walkways

The plan calls for improved and additional pedestrian connections through a strategy of strengthening existing connections along Larimer and Lawrence Streets as well as providing secondary pedestrian pathways that runs east-west and connect a number of different buildings.



Larimer St looking toward the campus

Legend

- Main Pedestrian Connections
- 11th Street Pedestrian Way
- Pedestrian Walkway
- Cherry Creek Trail



View of Cherry Creek Trail below grade



View of Cherry Creek Trail looking South



View of Cherry Creek Trail looking North West



Detailed Plan View of Cherry Creek Trail with new building on Island



View of Cherry Creek Trail in relation to new UC Denver building on Island

Cherry Creek Trail

The pedestrian and bike trail along Cherry Creek is a green respite along this major corridor but it is located below grade hindering its attractiveness, visibility and perception of safety. The proposed development on the Speer Island could relate to the Cherry Creek trail/ ramp by bringing the building down to the creek level which would provide a connection to the creek for downtown users as well as students and visitors. This change would need to be coordinated with flood plain, code issues, etc.

This also creates a strong relationship of the UC Denver Neighborhood under Speer Boulevard to the existing Dravo Building.

Hierarchy of Open Spaces



Hierarchy of Open Spaces

This is currently a mix of open spaces on campus. The new neighborhood should also have a hierarchy of open spaces that reinforce and strengthen the pedestrian system.

UC Denver Central Quad

A new UC Denver central quad is proposed to be located near the corner of Lawrence and 11th at the center of the neighborhood. It will be surrounded by the Science Buildings to the south-east and a new UC Denver building at the west corner of Lawrence and 11th Streets. The quad could be marked by a gateway element such as a tower on the east corner of the space. This tower could act as a landmark and special icon for UC Denver. While the existing quality of this public space is more open and has no focus of activities, the proposed central quad will provide more enclosed space by the surrounding buildings and its orientation to Lawrence Way will add a variety of activities and experiences for students. It could be used for special events and gatherings.

Entry Plazas

Entry plazas will be created at the intersections of Speer Boulevard and both Lawrence and Larimer Streets on the campus side. These spaces will create a coherent and appealing entry that welcomes visitors and creates a strong visual image of the institution. The entry plaza located at the intersection of Speer Boulevard and Larimer Street will also function as a transitional space and temporary gathering space serving as the 'foyer' to both the campus and the mixed use district.

Entry spaces on the campus side at both Larimer and Lawrence can create a strong sense of welcoming, orientation, and arrival for all those crossing Speer. These spaces should be well defined and have careful design attention to create an appropriate gateway for both UC Denver and the Auraria campus.



Reference: Plaza/ Transitional Space, University of Cincinnati

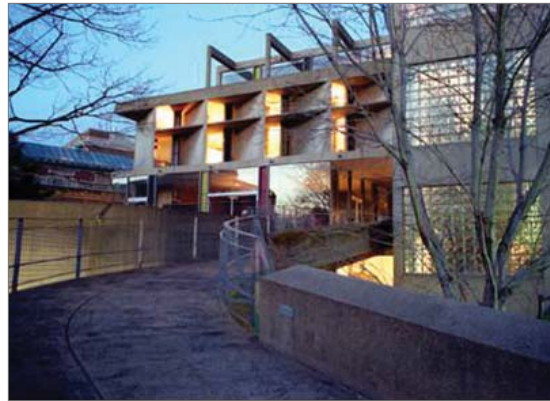


Reference: Plaza/ Open Space, Portland State University, Oregon

- Legend
- UC Denver Central Quad
 - Entry Plaza
 - Activity Plaza
 - Courtyard/ Open Space
 - Mixed Use Public Space
 - Cherry Creek



Reference: Courtyard/ Quad - Oxford University



Reference: Pedestrian Ramp through the Building, Harvard University

Courtyard / Open Space

A series of open spaces currently link the campus and accommodate various activities occurring on the campus. The proposed courtyards/ open spaces further this pattern and occur at different scales. They mark important corners and building entries, linking pedestrian paths and providing gathering and seating areas.

Mixed Use Public Space

A central public space was proposed by Space Syntax to be located at the corner of 11th and the diagonal walkway. This will create a focal point for the mixed use district and provide an important link from the mixed use district to the UC Denver Neighborhood.



Location Map



Section C - C

Entry Plaza Section on Lawrence Street

Cherry Creek

The proposed lower level connection between the Cherry Creek trail and the new UC Denver building on the island of Speer will bring a strong presence of nature to the area and celebrate the river to create a safer and more functional public open space. The pedestrian bridge under Speer Boulevard creates a series of open spaces connected to the creek and directly links the new island building to the open space west of the Dravo building.

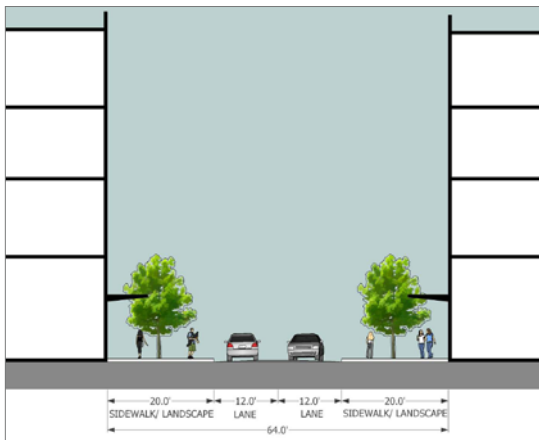
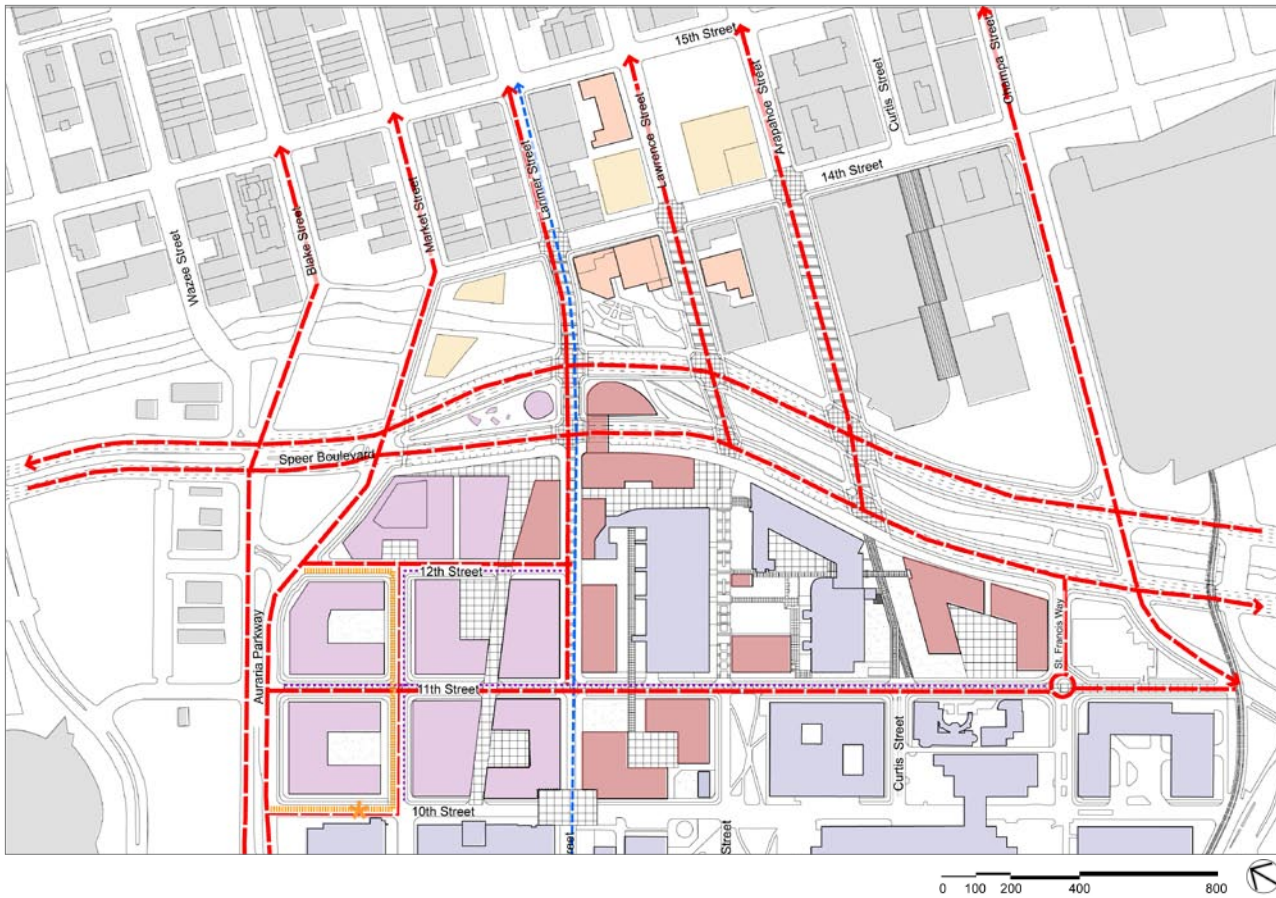


Cherry Creek Trail with Dravo building to the East



Open Space at Dravo Building links under Cherry Creek

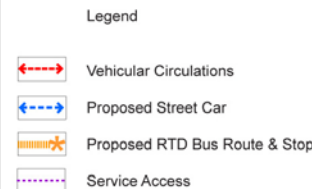
Vehicular Circulation



Larimer St. on campus



Potential Streetcar Transit on Larimer St. (Provided by Downtown Area Plan 2007)



Vehicular Circulation

Main Vehicular Connection

The primary vehicular connection that currently enters the campus from downtown is Larimer Street. As the mixed use district develops, there is an opportunity to create a much finer grid for traffic circulation.

Multi-Modal Street

Larimer Street is proposed to be the most vibrant and active urban street on the campus with various modes of transport including cars, bicycles and walking as well as a potential street car recommended by the Downtown Area Plan (2007). No on-street parking is proposed so that the width of the street is minimized. (See section to the left)

Proposed RTD Bus Route

This study explored the possibility of introducing a different route for RTD buses. It is proposed to make the bus route be a better location to both serve the campus and create a pedestrian friendly environment. Currently, Larimer Street is used as both a drop off and to stage buses. This conflicts with the pedestrian character of the street now and especially in the future as Larimer redevelops.

A proposed route is to make a loop from Auraria Parkway to the Tivoli on 10th and exiting on 12th Street. This would bring transit riders directly to the Tivoli and mixed use district and preserve Larimer as more pedestrian friendly. It is also proposed that RTD finds other locations for bus staging. This will need to be further explored as part of the mixed-use development planning.

Service Access

Service access will be mainly provided along 11th and 12th Streets and the proposed east-west street connecting from 12th through to 10th Street.

Landmarks / Gateway Elements



Landmarks/ Gateway Elements

UC Denver identity can be created through the use of built elements such as towers, colonnades, canopies and lighting features to introduce unique and iconic elements. These can provide a sense of identity and character that is unique to the UC Denver Neighborhood. They will also make it easier for students and visitors to navigate to their destination both within the campus and the surrounding downtown neighborhood.

The bridge building on the Speer Island could also act as a critical gateway element and landmark for the area. It should be treated as an iconic building for UC Denver with a distinctive and memorable presence.

Use of consistent and uniform signage for UC Denver academic buildings can also be used to reinforce the identity and provide orientation both within the campus and to the larger surrounding context.

A continuous and uniform paving pattern can create a street character along Larimer and Lawrence Streets that clearly distinguishes pedestrian passage and destination to the campus.



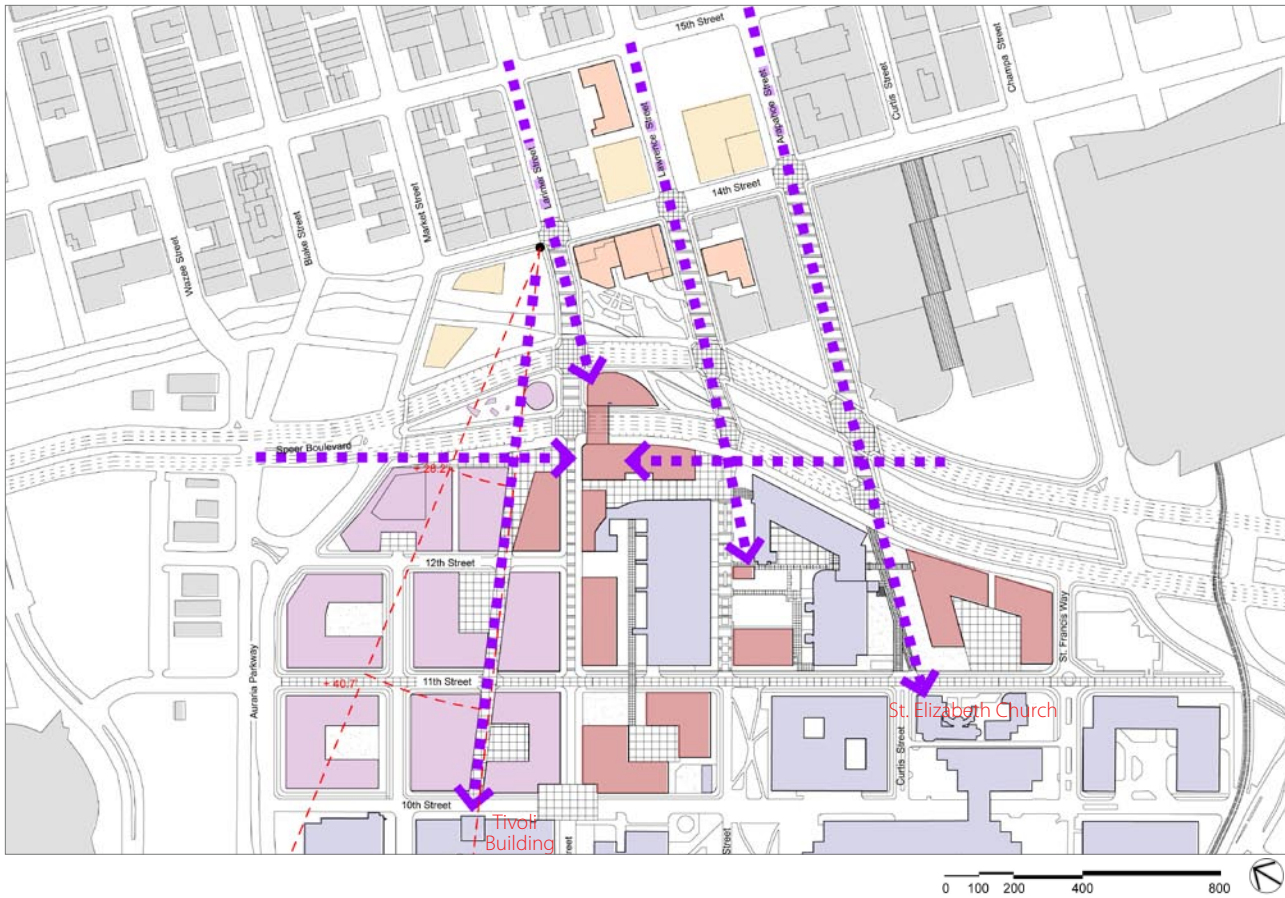
View of St. Elizabeth's Church from Arapahoe St, Downtown



Lawrence St looking west in downtown with new clock tower in background

- Legend
- UC Denver Campus Gateway Elements
 - Speer Boulevard Gateway
 - UC Denver Campus Entry Elements
 - Existing Landmarks
 - Street Character/ Pavement Continuity

Views and Axes



Views and Axes

View to the Tivoli building and Mt. Evans

The significant view corridor to the Tivoli tower is preserved and heightened by introducing a diagonal walkway from the corner of Speer and Larimer to the tower. The proposed academic and mixed use buildings will define the edge of the walkway framing the view corridor to the Tivoli building and the heights of the proposed developments ranging from two to four stories will maintain the view of Mt Evans. Pedestrians travelling along Larimer Street in downtown will be able to get a glimpse of the Tivoli building through the view corridor of the walkway providing both visual and physical connections from the downtown to the campus.

Arapahoe Street : View to St. Elizabeth's Church

St. Elizabeth's Church terminates the view down Arapahoe St. to the west and is an important identifying feature of the area. The proposed development located to the east of St. Elizabeth's is set back to respect this view corridor to the church. The set back area will be used as open space enhancing the pedestrian experience along the walkway to the west.

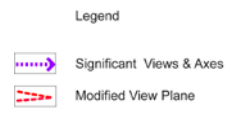
Larimer Street : UC Denver Neighborhood

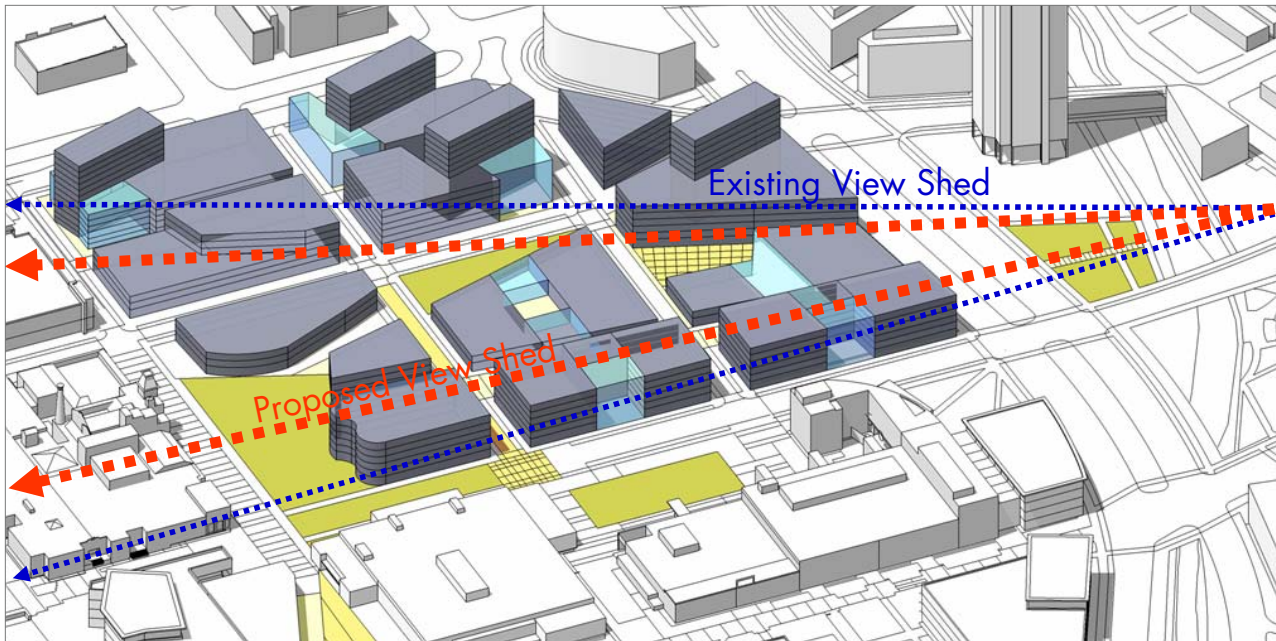
This is a significant view plane down Larimer St. that currently terminates at the North Classroom Building. Since the Concept Plan proposed wrapping the North Classroom Building with new development, this important axis would terminate at a building on the island. The proposed development on the Speer Island will provide an iconic façade fronting the downtown through the use of building elements and features.

If this building does not occur, the axis will terminate at the linear building to the east of North Classroom Building. As new development proceeds, careful attention needs to be paid to this view.



View to the Tivoli and Island Building from Larimer St, Downtown



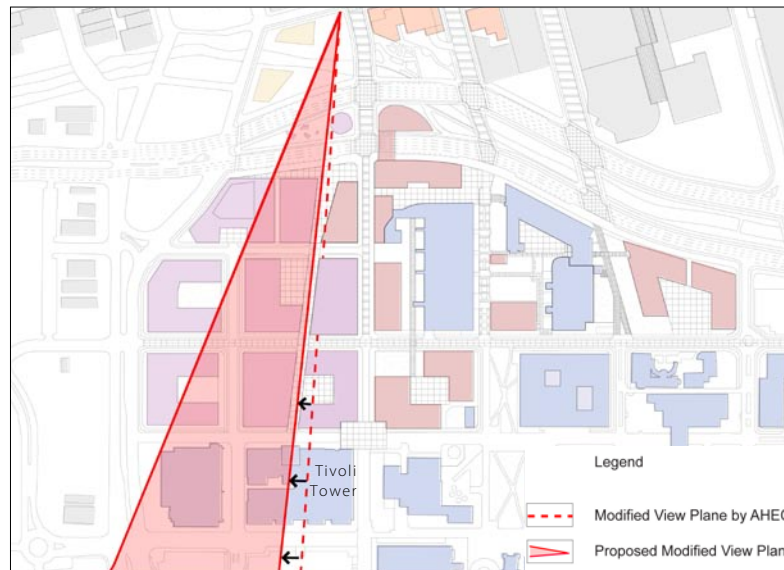


View Shed Analysis by Sasaki Associates, Studio Insite and U3 Ventures

Modified View Plane

The Old City Hall view plane has a significant effect on the development capacity and character of the area. The Concept Plan has been developed based on the assumption of modifying the view plane in a similar way as has been explored by AHEC. This includes respecting and reinforcing views of the Tivoli tower and Mt. Evans. By modifying the view plane in this way, the UC Denver Neighborhood is enhanced by having 4-6 story developments on the north side of Larimer in lieu of the 2-3 story buildings allowable by the existing view plane.

While supporting the modified view plane by AHEC in general, we have proposed a slight shift to the modified view plane (See 'Proposed Modified View Plane' diagram to the left). This modification is to ensure that the view corridor to the Tivoli building is reinforced with respect to the geometry of Tivoli walkway and provide even distribution of urban massing.



Proposed Modified View Plane

2.4 Alternative Concept Plan

Assumptions:

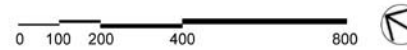
- No Ballfield Redevelopment
- No Development on Speer Island

This alternative was developed based on assumptions that the existing ballfield is not redeveloped and the view plane is not modified. This plan represents a reduced redevelopment opportunity. This approach only minimally supports fundamental urban design principles presented in this document in terms of creating an 'Urban Street Campus.' The character of Larimer Street as a strong pedestrian experience and connection is reduced. This concept can also be viewed as a 'short-term' or initial phasing of the UC Denver Micro Master Plan.



Legend

- UC Denver Existing Buildings
- AHEC Existing Buildings
- Downtown Existing Buildings
- UC Denver Proposed Buildings
- Potential Future Mixed Use Buildings
- New/ Future Downtown Buildings
- Existing Green/ Open Space
- Existing Ballfield
- Proposed Open Space

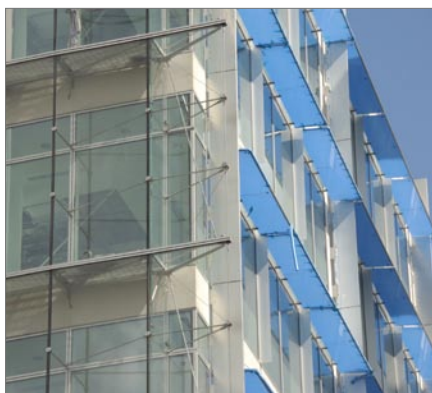




Existing Pervious Surfaces on Campus
(Provided by AHEC Master Plan Update 2007)



Existing Impervious Surfaces



Shading Devices



Photovoltaic Panels



Green Roofs

2.5 Sustainability

The AHEC Master Plan Update has a number of sustainable development strategies that set a framework toward achieving sustainability. These are consistent with the City of Denver's initiatives including Green Print Denver, public transit and investment in solar power, hybrid municipal fleet and high energy efficient buildings. The Downtown Area Plan also emphasizes sustainability that provides a further context for promoting ecological approaches within the UC Denver Area.

A number of sustainable design measures and recommendations have been highlighted below. These should be developed for the overall district for the site and landscaping, approaches to infrastructure and within each building for the UC Denver Area.

Energy Efficiency

- Construct and renovate buildings to be highly energy efficient;
- Maintain a high building use/ greenhouse gas emission ratio;
- Orient buildings and open spaces to climate;
- Pursue opportunities for green roof systems;
- Invest in photovoltaic panels on roofs and parking decks.

Water/ Landscape

- Use deciduous trees for natural shading;
- Plant trees that are xeric drought-tolerant species;
- Use low water requiring turf;
- Use pervious paving and green roofs to minimize run-off.

Waste

- Develop a waste reduction program for the campus;
- Integrate detention and water quality into street and pedestrian improvements;
- Encourage campus recycling.

Transportation

- Promote a public transit-oriented design and walkable campus;
- Reduce on-campus surface parking spaces;
- Invest in biodiesel and hybrid-fuel vehicles.

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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