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**San Francisco State University  
Campus Master Plan**

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**Chapter 3.  
Planning Context**

### 3. Planning Context



*San Francisco downtown skyline—location in the city is one of the University's great assets*

#### Location in San Francisco

One of SF State's great draws is its location in San Francisco, with access to the cultural richness and natural beauty of the Bay Area. SF State is the city's only public 4-year undergraduate institution.

Located in the southwest corner of the city, the campus sits along 19th Avenue (State Route 1), the major north-south connector between Interstate 280 and Highway 101. Bus stops, such as Muni's Route #28, are located at the northeast and southeast corners of the campus. Muni's M line provides light rail service directly between SF State and downtown San Francisco, the location of the University's Downtown Center. The nearest BART stations are at Daly City and Balboa Park.

The campus is bordered to the east by 19th Avenue and the Lakeside residential area; to the south by the Parkmerced residential development; to the north by the Stonestown Galleria shopping center; and to the west by Lake Merced Boulevard and, beyond it, the lake and its associated open spaces, including Harding Park Golf Course, Fort Funston, and the San Francisco Zoo. Stern Grove is located approximately one mile north of the academic core of campus (see Neighborhood Context map).

#### 1989 Master Plan

The last comprehensive master plan for the campus was completed in 1989, almost 20 years ago. While many of the principles of the 1989 plan continue to apply, fundamental changes have occurred in the planning context—notably, acquisition of significant new property, a new strategic plan for the University, and a system-wide commitment to sustainable growth—that present opportunities to rethink the campus in ways that were not possible previously.

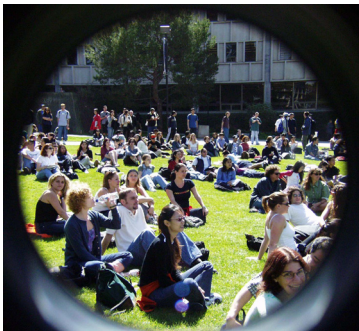
#### Enrollment Growth to 25,000 FTE

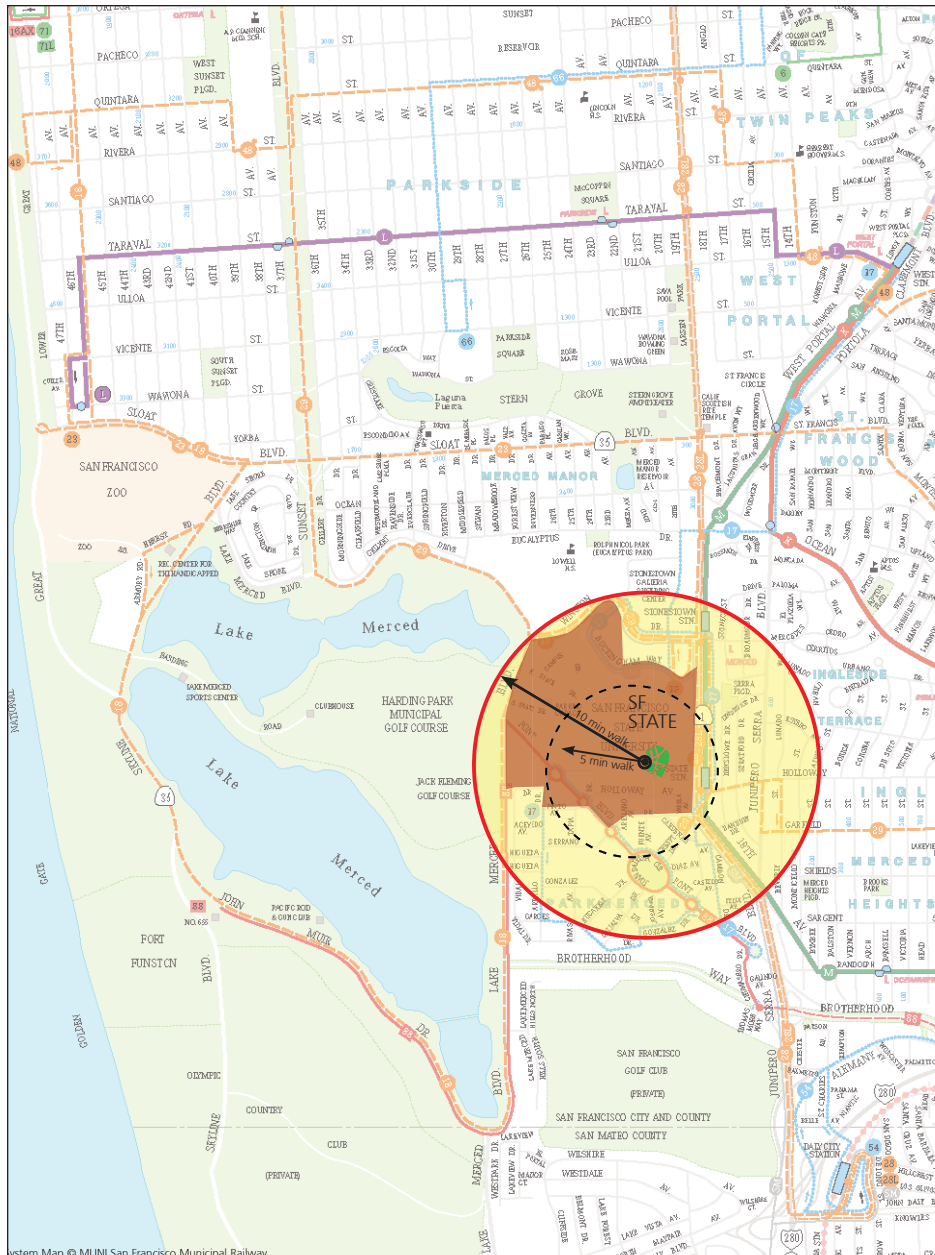
The 1989 SF State master plan anticipated enrollment growth to 20,000 full-time equivalent students (FTES) over a 20- to 30-year period. As of fall 2005, enrollment at SF State was already approaching its cap of 20,000 FTES.

To continue to meet demand among the state's growing population for high-quality, accessible higher education, the California State University (CSU) Office of the Chancellor has set a target of 2.5 percent annual enrollment growth. At this rate, SF State is projected to reach 25,000 FTES by fall 2015. Since construction of new academic and support space typically lags behind enrollment growth, the University is not expected to attain capacity to accommodate 25,000 FTES until 2020.

The charge of the master plan is to provide the physical infrastructure and the most efficient sequencing of new construction to support an additional 5,000 FTES, as well as to define the capacity of the campus for growth in the future.

*SF State's central Quad*





Neighborhood Context

## A New Strategic Plan

In August 2005, the University adopted an ambitious strategic plan that calls for San Francisco State University “to become the nation’s preeminent public urban university.” Translating this vision into physical terms was the challenge of the campus master plan study.

The strategic plan is based on a set of core values that underlie all areas of university endeavor. They are:



- Equity and Social Justice
- Community Engagement
- International Perspectives
- Opportunities for Personal and Professional Growth

These values are expressed in a set of common themes that run throughout the strategic plan. They are:



- Academic Excellence
- Improved Access and Flexibility for Diverse Communities
- Engaged and Expanded Intellectual Community
- Institutional Culture that Supports Change and Innovation

*Intellectual engagement and access for diverse communities are cornerstones of the University's value system and strategic plan.*

The task of the master plan is to translate the University's core values and strategic themes into a corresponding set of physical strategies that help to strengthen the intellectual and social fabric of the University—physical moves that build campus community, foster collaboration, improve accessibility, strengthen the University's visibility and image, and forge stronger connections to the surrounding city.

## Commitment to Sustainability

Institutions of higher education are making sustainability a central tenet of campus policy and practice, extending to all aspects of the campus environment, including green building and site design, energy and water conservation, transportation, procurement, food systems/recycling, and curriculum.

Colleges and universities have a particular responsibility to embrace sustainability in an exemplary way as they prepare students for lives of responsible citizenship. In his August 2006 annual address to the faculty, President Robert Corrigan reiterated SF State's commitment to educating students who are informed, ethical citizens, and he called for a campus-wide initiative to make social and personal responsibility integral to the curriculum and a signature of San Francisco State.

*Vegetated roofs and walls and cisterns to collect rainwater are among the green design techniques that conserve energy and water.*



The master plan provides an opportunity to make sustainability not only central but demonstrable—to express through the campus landscape, buildings, transportation, and infrastructure the University's commitment to environmental health and social equity. Or, as stated in the University's strategic plan, "to model on campus the world in which we would like to live."

Executive Order 987, signed by Chancellor Charles Reed on August 2, 2006, establishes policies for energy conservation, sustainable building practices, and physical plant management for the CSU system. It sets a new goal of reducing energy consumption by 15 percent by the end of fiscal year 2009/2010 as compared to 2003/2004, and establishes goals for energy independence and renewable energy procurement, including the requirement for each campus to develop a "campus-wide integrated strategic energy resource plan...to drive the overall energy program."

Executive Order 987 calls for the development of a CSU Sustainability Measurement System based on LEED™ principles. It specifies that all new buildings or major renovations constructed beginning in FY 2006-2007 meet or exceed the minimum requirements of that system—the equivalent of LEED™ Certified—and that each campus "strive to achieve a higher standard...equivalent to LEED™ Silver."



Among the attributes considered “sustainable” are “siting and design considerations that optimize local geographic features to improve sustainability, such as proximity to public transportation and maximizing vistas, microclimate, and prevailing winds” and “systems designed for optimization of energy, water, and other natural resources”—all clearly applicable to the SF State University campus master plan.

## Universal Design and Access

Accessibility to the University’s programs and services by diverse communities is a central theme of the strategic plan, translated into the specific objective: “enhance and develop programs to make SFSU physically safe and accessible.”

Universal design—providing an environment comfortably usable by the widest range of people possible—is a guiding principle of the master plan. Specifically, the master plan calls for direct and comfortable routes across campus, welcoming entrances into buildings, and inviting gathering places, using solutions that are imaginative and well designed, even where physical constraints are daunting given the extreme topographic changes on the SF State campus. The University is committed to providing gracious, inclusive accessibility to all facilities.



*The Lewis Center for Environmental Studies at Oberlin College was a pioneer project in raising the standard of sustainable campus design.*

## Expansion of the Campus Footprint

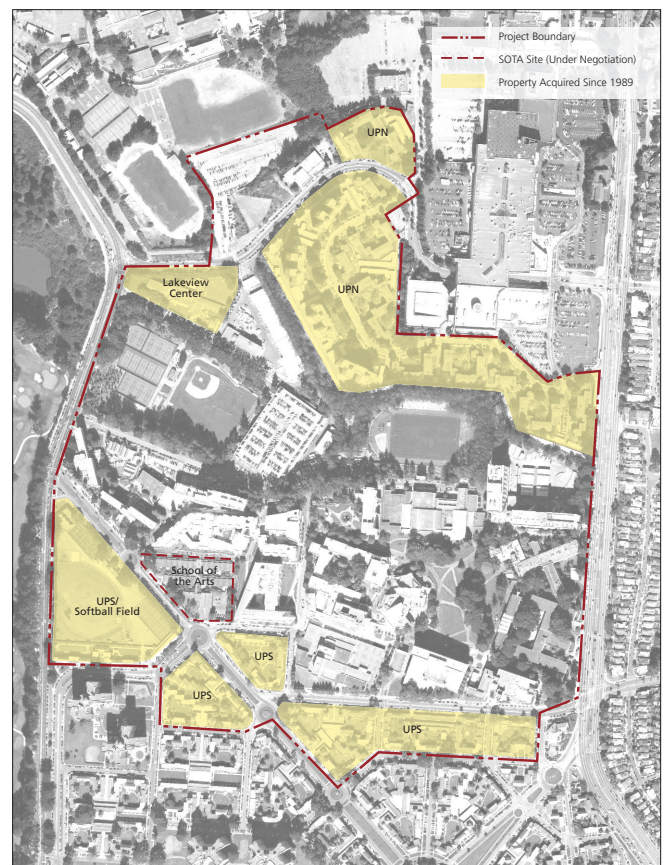
Since completion of the previous master plan in 1989, the campus has increased its footprint markedly, as illustrated in the accompanying Land Acquisitions map. With the addition of Lakeview Center, University Park South (UPS)—formerly the northernmost blocks of the Parkmerced property—and University Park North (UPN)—formerly the Stonestown Apartments—the campus has grown from 95 to 141.6 acres, an almost 50 percent increase in area. At this writing, negotiations are underway with the San Francisco Unified School District to purchase the 2.5-acre property that formerly housed the School of the Arts (SOTA).

Integrating these new properties into a coherent, well-functioning campus is another major challenge of the master plan—in particular, bridging the extreme topographic divide between the core campus and the UPN property.

## Increased Campus Housing

SF State is transitioning from a predominantly commuter to a more residential campus. Between 1989 and 2005, the University essentially doubled the number of students it houses, from 6 to 11 percent. With construction of the Towers (1991) and the Village at Centennial Square (2001), SF State now provides 2,242 undergraduate beds in a cohesive residential zone. UPN and UPS have added 959 1-, 2-, and 3-bedroom units, greatly expanding the University’s capacity to provide affordable, close-in housing to faculty,

*Land Acquisition since 1989*





*Historic Ecology Map - depicts the natural landscape features of this area and the shared history of the campus and Lake Merced*

staff, and graduate students and supervised housing for undergraduates. The UPN and UPS units are being made available to SF State students, faculty, and staff as previous tenants vacate.

Student demographics also are changing. Fall 2005 marked the first time that SF State admitted more first-time freshmen than transfer students, 47 percent from outside the Bay Area. This shift to a younger student population from a wider geographic area creates a need not only for more housing, but also for an array of student-life services, programs, and activities that support a residential community.

As of academic year 2005-2006, approximately 30 percent of the UPN and UPS units were occupied by SF State affiliates. As the University gradually increases occupancy of these units, replaces some over time with higher-density units, and adds neighborhood retail and other support services, the campus will become a more vibrant and self-sufficient residential community.

### Shared History with Lake Merced

The SF State campus is located immediately adjacent to Lake Merced, the largest natural freshwater lake and wetland habitat in San Francisco. The northeastern arm of Lake Merced once occupied the lower portion of the campus. A seasonal stream, part of a network of streams and creeks within the watershed, flowed through the central valley of campus into Lake Merced.

This shared ecological history, graphically illustrated in the accompanying historic map, has been obscured over time. The valley, which runs east-west through the campus and contains the parking garage and playing fields, is the remnant of the former stream canyon and lake bed. Dominated by the garage and overgrown with trees and brush on its perimeter, the valley is barely discernible at present. The formidable barrier of Lake Merced Boulevard further separates the campus from the lake.

Lake Merced is an extraordinary environmental and recreational resource. Reconnecting the campus to the lake—visually, hydrologically, physically—offers multiple benefits to both the campus and larger community.

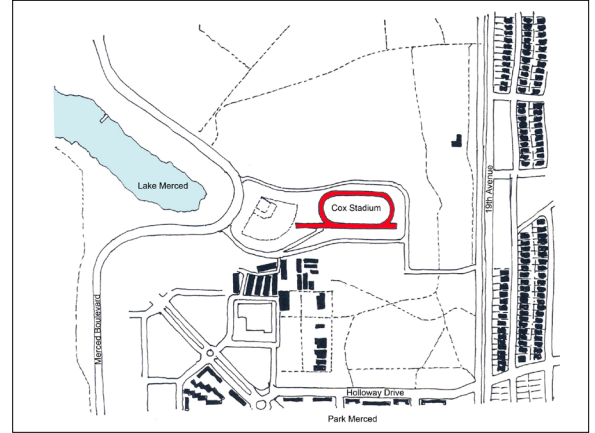
### Evolution of the Campus

The historic evolution of the campus provides important cues for its future. As illustrated in the accompanying series of drawings, the site has evolved over a period of 50 years from open farmland to a fairly dense urban university campus. Key features depicted in the earliest drawing—proximity to Lake Merced and access to public transportation by the M streetcar line—remain two of the campus's greatest assets, despite existing barriers.

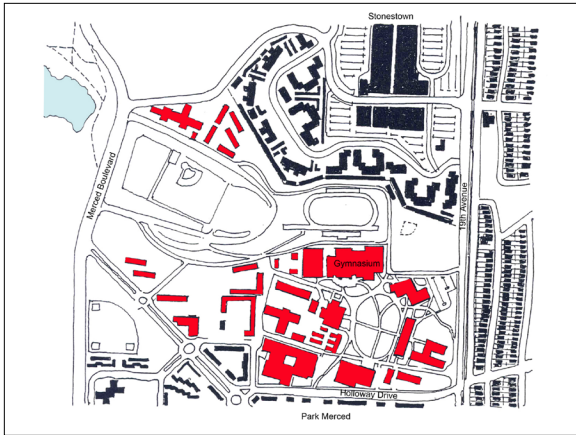




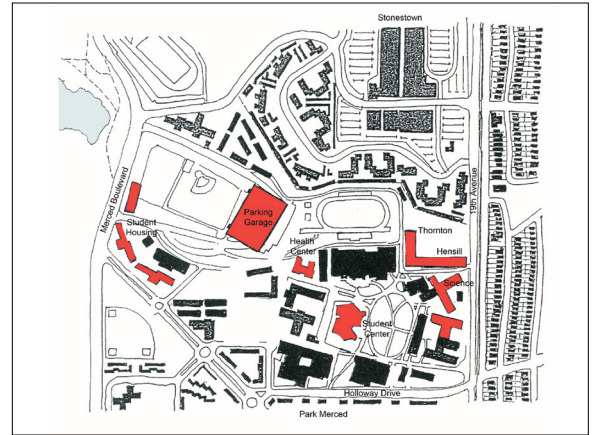
1935  
MUNI "M" line in operation, 19th Avenue



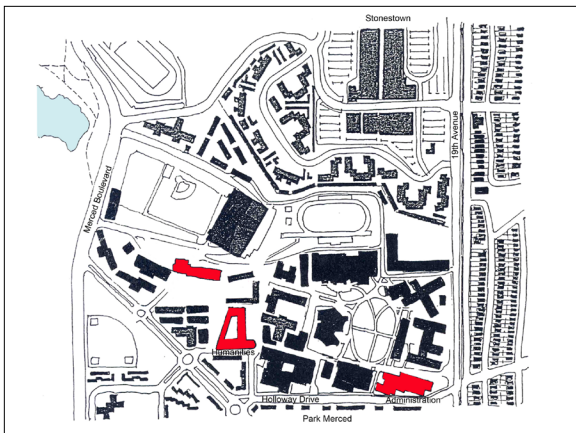
1936 - 1948  
Cox Stadium built, Parkmerced started



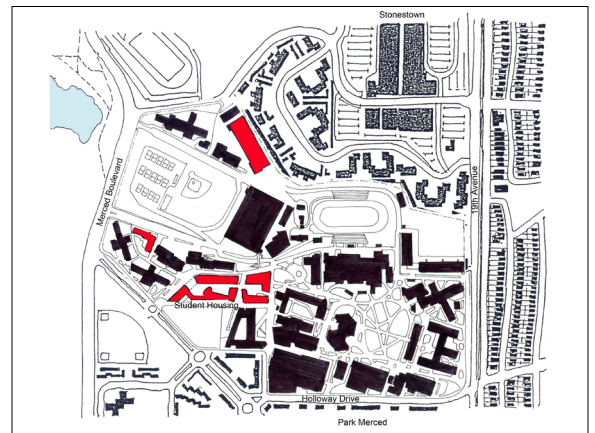
1949 - 1958  
Campus built, together with Stonestown and Parkmerced



1959 - 1978  
Parking garage, Student Center and Hensill / Thornton Halls built



1979 - 1997  
Humanities Building & The Towers built and Administration expanded



1998 - 2005  
Student Housing expansion - Village at Centennial Square

## Evolution of Campus

### San Francisco State University Campus Master Plan



From the beginning, however, development of the new campus turned away from the lake. In the early 1940s, the existing stream canyon was filled to create level terraces for Cox Stadium and playing fields, and the stream was routed underground into a storm sewer that ran below the roadway and emptied into the lake. At that time, Lake Merced Boulevard still curved around the northeastern arm of the lake.

The first major academic buildings were constructed a decade later, in the 1950s. Clustered around the Quad, they formed the core of campus, much as it appears today. Several of the existing buildings—Science, Business, Creative Arts and the gym—date back to this period, as do the original wings of the Administration Building and the library. Significantly, the library—the symbolic font of knowledge—was sited directly on axis with the Quad. The distinctive northeast-southwest alignment of the Quad and the surrounding buildings does not conform to the city street grid, but instead appears to follow the orientation of the former farm fields and the natural slope of the land. The Quad remains the heart of the campus.

In the early 1950s, Lake Merced Boulevard was straightened, blocking off about 10 acres of the lake and its shoreline marsh. This reclaimed land became part of the campus, used for tennis courts as it is today. The barrier now posed by Lake Merced Boulevard firmly separated the campus from the lake. Concurrent with the 1950s building boom on campus, Stonestown and Parkmerced were completed, radically changing the neighboring areas.

The 1960s and 1970s saw the continued development of the campus core, with the construction of a new student center, two library expansions, and a pair of towering new science buildings. The first student housing was constructed to the west, and in the early 1960s, the parking garage was sited in the valley, which was then the northern edge of campus.

The last 15 years on campus have seen development across all building types, including new academic and student support facilities and the expansion of student housing. Collectively, these additions have extended the campus decidedly westward.

The recent acquisition of the UPN and UPS properties has added approximately 44 acres to the campus, mostly north of the core, greatly expanding the University's residential capacity.

## Future Development Sites

Even with the acquisition of significant new property, SF State remains a landlocked campus, with few, if any, unencumbered sites for development. To maintain the open landscape character that gives the campus its identity and to provide adequate outdoor gathering and recreation space for the growing campus population, the only viable option is to redevelop existing building sites, increasing density where appropriate to maximize efficient use of land.

One of the initial tasks in the planning process was to assess the condition of existing buildings to determine potential candidates for redevelopment. Using data from recent studies and information gathered from SF State facilities staff, the planning team evaluated the condition of the structural, mechanical, and electrical systems of all major campus buildings except those recently constructed or renovated or planned for renovation in the near term. Each building system was ranked, with structural weight-



ed more heavily due to the higher repair cost and greater threat to life safety posed by a deficient structural system. A composite score for each building determined its overall ranking, with the highest score indicating the worst condition.

Three additional building evaluation criteria were combined with the building systems ranking to arrive at an overall score. They are FAR (floor area ratio), a typical measure of a parcel's efficient use; the building's contribution to the character and quality of the campus environment; and suitability of the building to the program or use housed within it. Based on their overall score, buildings were grouped into four categories indicating their potential for redevelopment within the short to long term. The order of priority shown in the accompanying Building Conditions Matrix corresponds generally to the sequence of new construction proposed by the master plan, with buildings in the worst condition being high-priority replacement candidates.

The building rankings are also shown in the accompanying Building Redevelopment Potential diagram, which uses the same color coding as the matrix to illustrate where on campus opportunities exist for redevelopment.

Facility No.	Building	Building Condition	FAR	Contribution to Campus Character and Quality	Suitability to Program/Use	Total	Redevelopment Potential
023D	Science Building	4	4	3	3	14	high / short-term
005	Lakeview Center	4	4	2	3	13	
089	Sutro Library	3	4	3	3	13	
074	Creative Arts	4	3	3	3	13	
007	HSS	4	3	3	3	13	
095	Gymnasium	3	4	2	3	12	
092	University Park South - Block 42	4	4	2	2	12	
050	University Park North - Towers	4	3	3	2	12	
027	Central Plant	2	4	3	2	11	
021	Residence Dining Center	3	4	2	2	11	
030	Student Health Center	2	4	2	3	11	moderate / mid-term
097	University Park North - Garden	3	4	2	2	11	
051	University Park South - Block 41	3	4	2	2	11	
098	Administration Building	4	2	3	2	11	
057	Business	4	3	1	2	10	
032	Psychology	4	3	1	2	10	
025	Child Care Center	1	4	2	2	9	
073	Corporation Yard	1	4	3	1	9	
002	Mary Park	2	3	3	1	9	
100B	Mary Ward	2	3	3	1	9	low / long-term
029	Fine Arts	3	2	2	2	9	
088	Thorton Hall	3	1	3	2	9	
001	Parking Garage	2	1	3	2	8	
026	Burk	3	3	1	1	8	
008	Cesar Chavez Student Center	1	2	2	2	7	no
003	Humanities Building	1	3	2	1	7	
091	J.P. Leonard Library (future GSF)	1	1	2	3	7	
022	Towers	1	1	3	2	7	
004	Hensill Hall	1	1	3	1	6	
006	Student Services	1	2	1	1	5	

#### Rankings:

##### Building Condition

- 1 - Building Systems in good condition.
- 2 - Building Systems in moderate condition.
- 3 - Building Systems in fair condition.
- 4 - Building Systems in poor condition.

##### FAR

- 1 - +3.0
- 2 - 1.5-3.0
- 3 - 1.0-1.5
- 4 - 0-1.0

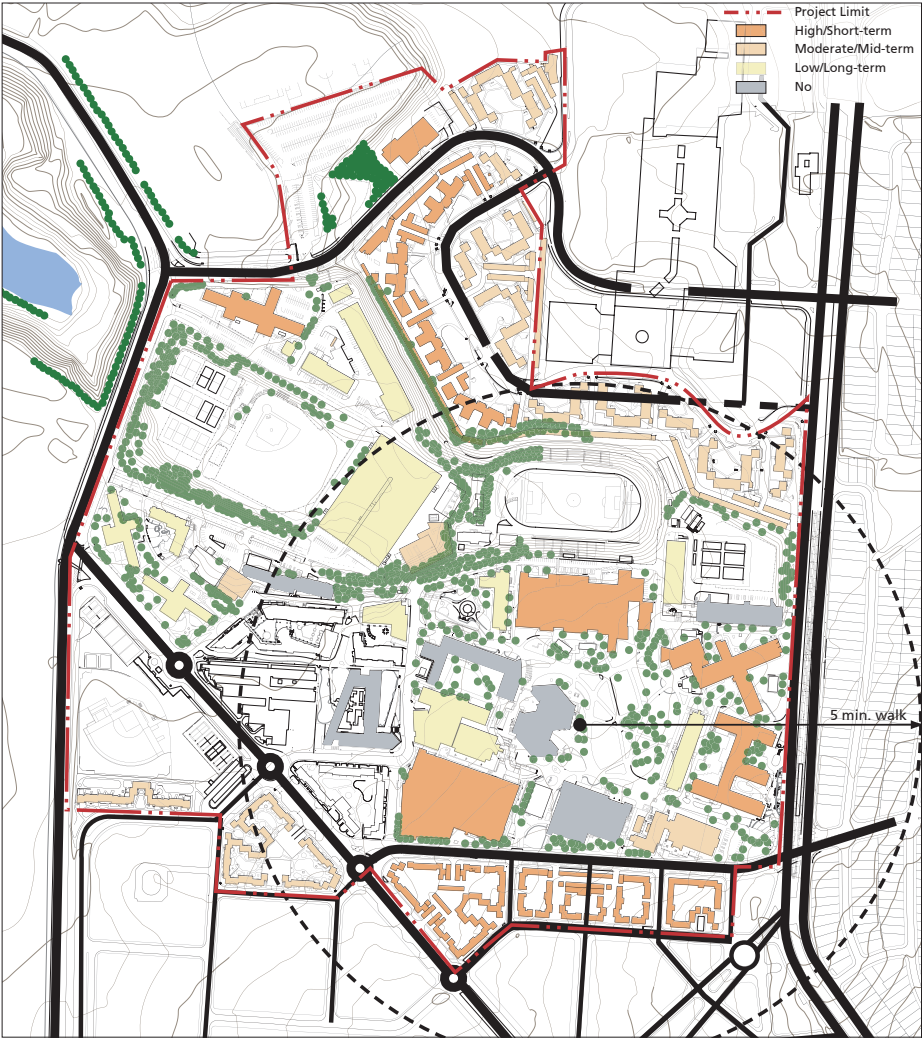
##### Contribution to Campus Character and Quality

- 1 - Contributes
- 2 - Neutral
- 3 - Detracts

##### Suitability to Program/Use

- 1 - Space well-suited to program
- 2 - Adequate
- 3 - Deficient

Building Condition Matrix



Building Redevelopment Potential