Chapter 4.4 – Main Campus: Master Plan Development

Master Plan Development provides an illustrative description of the overall vision of the physical changes that would be produced by following the frameworks set out in Chapter 4.3 Main Campus: District Design Guidelines by the Campus Master Plan. This campaign of improvements is phased to the year 2015 and beyond.

Illustrative Master Plan 121
Illustrative Plans & Perspectives by District 122
Priority Landscape Design Projects 135
University Place 136
Green Mountain Walkway 138
Redstone Walkway 140
University Gateway & Arboretum 141
Main Street Land Bridge 142
The University Green District is the site of the University Place priority project. There will also be an extensive program of tree plantings associated with the University Place project and an augmentation of existing plantings in open spaces. Additional possible improvements to the District include a re-evaluation of the planting of the Historic University Green and a study of grading issues on the Green. Existing walkways will be brought up to the recommendations described in Chapter 8 – Design Goals & Strategies as means become available.
The Main Street North District is one of the locations of the priority landscape project, the Green Mountain Walkway. An extensive program of tree plantings along the Green Mountain Walkway, in informal groupings within existing open spaces, and along Colchester Avenue and Main Street, will dramatically change the appearance and feel of the District. Existing walkways will be brought up to the recommendations described in Chapter 8 – Design Goals & Strategies as means become available.
MAIN STREET NORTH DISTRICT

View looking northwest - Green Mountain Walkway & new residential zone (C-B-W Quad)

View looking southwest - New Engineering Quad, Phase I

View looking southwest - New Engineering Quad, Phase II
An extensive campaign of landscape improvements is envisioned for the Trinity District to improve its connectivity with the core campus. Improvements include a new pedestrian circulation system, the elimination of some surface parking lots, an outdoor performance and gathering space and the planting of additional trees along new paths and in clusters on lawns. Street tree plantings along Colchester Avenue will also be augmented with additional plantings.
The Gateway District is the site of the proposed University Gateway and a primary component of the campus-wide Arboretum. Extensive plantings associated with the University Gateway Arboretum will transform the visual character of this District, and along Main Street. Existing walkways beyond the scope of the Arboretum will also be brought up to the recommendations described in Chapter 8 – Design Goals & Strategies as means become available.
GATEWAY DISTRICT

Gateway District looking north on Main Street toward Lake Champlain - Existing, 2005

Gateway District looking north on Main Street toward Lake Champlain - Full Build Out of Land Banks
The University Heights District is also the site of another but more limited portion of the University Gateway Arboretum, as well as the Redstone Walkway, and the land bridge crossing over Main Street. These projects feature extensive plans for the planting of additional trees on campus. Walkways beyond the scope of these improvements will be brought up to the recommendations described in Chapter 8 – Design Goals & Strategies as means become available.
Some plantings of additional trees will augment the existing mature landscape of the Redstone District. Walkways within the Redstone District will also be upgraded to the recommendations described in Chapter 8 – Design Goals & Strategies as means become available.
The Athletics District is undergoing extensive transformation under the guidance of the Athletic Facilities Master plan. These improvements include additional outdoor seating for spectators, upgraded playing fields, and refreshment and ticketing stands for spectators. In addition, the University is currently assessing other athletic needs, including basketball and hockey improvements.
The Centennial Sports District is the site of multiple land banks for residential, administrative, and parking facilities. Improvements to existing Physical Plant administrative facilities are being evaluated and considered within this District. These land banks have been arranged to preserve the historic Centennial Fields Baseball Field and Grandstand at the heart of the new district, and harmonize with the scale of the surrounding neighborhood. New building(s) should be arranged around quadrangles which will create an intimate and green living and working environment. Walkways will be built concurrently with new construction to meet the recommendations described in Chapter 8 – Design Goals & Strategies. New plantings will line the access road to Centennial Sports District, extending the street tree plantings of Colchester Avenue into this District.
The Centennial District is the site of two unassigned land banks but will most likely be academic, administrative, and parking facilities. Should the University grow in this District, these land banks will be developed concurrently with new pathways meeting the recommendations described in Chapter 8 – Design Goals & Strategies. New buildings within these land banks should be carefully situated to preserve existing stands of mature trees. Where appropriate, additional infill plantings will ensure the continued health of the existing woodlands.
Priority Landscape Design Projects

The Priority Landscape Design Projects are the broad gestures that establish a coherent structure of open spaces and buildings upon which the Campus Master Plan and future development builds. The projects form a connective tissue for the campus landscape, concentrating new development, tying together existing successful open spaces, and building a coherent pedestrian experience and sense of place.

- University Place
- Green Mountain Walkway
- Redstone Walkway
- University Gateway Arboretum
- Land Bridge
University Place

University Place is pre-eminent amongst the priority projects for the historic and iconic nature of the buildings involved, its visual prominence, and location at the heart of the campus. The enhancements to University Place are to be a flagship project, demonstrating to the University community the transformative potential that landscape initiatives hold for the campus as a whole. The University is currently in negotiations with the City of Burlington regarding the transfer of road ownership to the University. An important part of this discussion is providing appropriate sites for existing food vendors on campus should the transfer of ownership occur. In addition, the University is committed to a collaborative community planning process.

The transformation of University Place begins with the roadway itself. Bollards create a zone of restricted vehicular access on University Place from the south end of Old Mill to the north end of Williams Hall while allowing emergency and service access by innovative design and function of bollards. Each end of the roadway will continue to have limited vehicular access while the interior portion (between bollards) will be limited to emergency and service access needs. The pedestrian space that is created reframes the relationship between the University Historic Green and the retention of the front lawns of Old Mill, Williams Hall, and Billings Center, creating a pedestrian-focused open space at the heart of campus. This re-framing is mindful of the latter’s historic integrity as a traditional New England Village Green, bounded on all four sides by roads. The granite curb stones and grade separation that marks the roadway are maintained, and emphasized by the addition of a cobblestone band to channel stormwater, and guide snowplows.

The entire length of the University Place roadway and adjacent pedestrian spaces are re-surfaced with vehicular-grade unit pavers that give the color variation, contrast and texture of a traditional road surface, such as cobblestones.

The grade change between University Place and the University Historic Green is taken up by a stepping structure of granite seat-walls that accommodates disabled-access walkways down to the University Historic Green. Viewed from the east, these narrow stepped bands of gray granite will create a visual base note tying the landmark ensemble of University Place together, with materials appropriate to the historic character of the space.

Another series of granite step-walls ties the lawn of each building in the historic University Row to the road surface. These seat-walls establish a visual unity along University Place, and create a space that is more conducive to formal gatherings and informal socializing. The seat-walls also frame an elevated lawn in front of each building that allows it to maintain a discrete setting appropriate to its architecture.

A formal planting of American Elms, Maples or Sycamores in two rows, one running along the east side of the roadway, and one along the edge of the elevated plane behind the seat-wall restores the spirit of the linear plantings of American Elms that were lost in the 1960s.

The illustrative plan and perspective represent preliminary concepts only.
UNIVERSITY PLACE
The Green Mountain Walkway is a pedestrian avenue and connective green space that creates a system of linkages through the core of the campus to Trinity District to the north and Redstone Campus to the south. Where University Place represents the historic heart of the campus, Green Mountain Walkway has a more contemporary context, which is reflected in the arcing form of the walkways, its new open spaces, lighting and site furnishings.

The Green Mountain Walkway begins at the north edge of the Main Street North District on Colchester Avenue, where the existing access road to Fletcher Allen Health Care has been realigned to allow the walkway to follow a more direct route. The Green Mountain Walkway moves through the C-B-W Quadrangle with a sequence of gently-arcing walkways that strike a counterbalance with the existing architecture grid of the quad. A secondary system of pathway traces the perimeter of the C-B-W quad, and cuts through it laterally and diagonally. At the Bailey/Howe Library, the Green Mountain Walkway forks, with one branch arcing through the Bailey/Howe Quadrangle, and another towards the foot of the hill at the Aiken Center, where it meets up with a pathway that moves diagonally through the Dudley H. Davis Center Oval, to connect with the Redstone Walkway to the south and the University Gateway Arboretum to the east.

The convergence of the Green Mountain Walkway and the pathway leading to Converse Hall is marked with a plaza that is envisioned as a center of social and residential life in the C-B-W Quad.

The arcing paths of the Green Mountain Walkway are lined on either side by a row of deciduous trees. The open spaces on either side of the walkway are planted with more formal groupings of trees, and open glades.

The Green Mountain Walkway is tied together by a consistent and distinct language of materials and site furnishings.

Green Mountain Walkway is also being considered as a possible future location for some of the food vendors currently located on University Place due to the future transformation into a high pedestrian activity zone. This location, convenient to both the core campus and Trinity District along with electrical water hook-ups, would be an excellent place for outdoor eating and informal gathering.

The illustrative plan and perspective represent preliminary concepts only.
GREEN MOUNTAIN WALKWAY
Redstone Walkway and its associated landscape improvements form one of the primary connective green spaces of the campus. The Redstone Walkway physically and visually merges the historic estate landscape of Redstone Hall with the contemporary landscape fabric of the University campus. The Redstone Walkway links the residence halls of the Redstone and University Districts with the academic facilities north of Main Street. As such, it has a high volume of pedestrian usage daily.

The Redstone Walkway is sheltered from the prevailing winds from the northwest, and screened from surrounding residences by a field of landforms planted with drifts of trees. The landforms create a richly textured visual environment for the walkway, and form smaller pocket spaces that are more usable and create microclimates suitable for less-hardy plant materials.

The Redstone Pathway maintains a 12’ width that is broad enough to accommodate cyclists and pedestrians. The path is sunk 3” below the grade of the surrounding turf in order to maintain cleaner conditions at the edge of the path. The sinuous form of the pathway is reinforced by regular tree plantings lining alternating sides of the paths. Under one option that is currently being considered, a 1’ wide band of cobblestone channel occurs on alternating sides of the pathway. The cobblestone band serves to channel stormwater, guide snowplows, and channel pedestrians away from the grassy edge of the path. The edge of the pathway is maintained by a granite or pre-cast concrete curb.

The illustrative plan and perspective represent preliminary concepts only.
The University Gateway & Arboretum is envisioned as a teaching tool, a recreational asset, and an embodiment of the University’s commitment to sustainability and environmental education. The Arboretum replaces the transitional landscape of parking lots that currently defines the approach to the University from the highway with a wooded and park-like open space that reflects the University’s commitment to the development of a sustainable infrastructure.

The Arboretum concepts incorporates open spaces from the Gateway and the University Heights Districts as well as campus-wide. By incorporating both sides of Main Street and the two jug-handles into one physically and visually cohesive open space, the Arboretum diminishes the barrier role that Main Street forms between the northern and southern halves of the campus. Within this plan, views of Mount Mansfield and Camel’s Hump will be maintained.

Planting within the Arboretum will be arranged in a sequence of informal drifts and open glades, with a view to creating a stimulating pedestrian experience. A planting plan that reflects species taxonomy and the habitat and microclimate needs of the various specimens will be developed in consultation with the appropriate University staff and faculty. The Arboretum allows for alumni and the broader University community to get involved in the physical transformation of the campus through the donation of memorial spaces and groves.

The walkways within the gateway arboretum are to have a 8’ width to accommodate lower levels of traffic and the more intimate and picturesque quality of this part of the campus. The walkways will be sunk 3” below ground level, with edges maintained by stone or pre-cast concrete curbs. The surface of the paths will be asphalt paving.

Lighting along the walkways within the Arboretum will maintain the University standard, with Lumen Octagonal streetlights.

The illustrative plan and perspective represent preliminary concepts only.
Since the 1960s, the University has recognized the need to bridge the north and south portions of the campus across Main Street. Although a land bridge was proposed and federally funded in the City of Burlington 1990s Main Street Improvement Project, there was not a consensus city-wide, and this was removed from the Project.

However, this is still an important priority of the University and is important to keep this concept in future planning for many reasons, including pedestrian/bicycle circulation and safety, aesthetics, and land connectivity, thereby, making significant improvements to the open space network of the Main Campus.

The illustrative plan represents preliminary concepts only.