



North Dakota State Capitol Capitol Complex Master Plan

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Prepared for The Capitol Grounds Planning
Commission
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INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS (continued)

NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

While a strong identity and “fit” is important within the community context, it is paramount that the Capitol Grounds remain a good neighbor to the surrounding residential areas. There are an unusually high number of educational facilities within walking distance of the grounds. These relationships present a unique opportunity to develop strong links between governmental and educational need; yet, demand a sensitive approach to the ultimate development of the Capitol Grounds.

Planning Goals:

- Develop strong relationships and linkages with adjacent education facilities.
- Create a sensitive approach to development that insures compatibility with adjacent residential use.
- Utilize state-owned parkland east of State Street to create additional amenities for neighborhood residents and Capitol Grounds visitors and employees.

VISUAL ANALYSIS

Protection of significant view corridors on-site and off-site is critical in maintaining a strong identity and relationship within the community. Cluttered views and poor visual access lead to safety and identity concerns, while enhanced visual corridors can maximize the educational value and beauty of the Capitol Grounds setting.

Planning Goals:

- Enhance visual access to the Governor's Residence, improving security and prominence.
- Improve views of the Capitol Grounds from the north and east approaches.
- Enhance the visual quality of the 9th Street and 6th Street approaches.
- Develop monument placement program to optimize visibility and a sense of continuity.
- Develop off-site view corridors.
- Utilize accent lighting to improve visual access of prominent features.



View to Missouri River Valley



Existing View to Governor's Residence

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS (continued)

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER

The architectural character of the Capitol Complex is dominated by the power of the 19-story Capitol Tower, the beauty of the 3-story Legislative Wing, and the dark attraction of the glassy void of the major entrance which ties the two elements together. A subtle adaptation of Art Deco character offers an elegant level of detail, most beautifully expressed in the main entry and first floor Legislative areas. The predominant gray limestone walls of the State Capitol set a strong precedent for the major vocabulary of building materials which has been recalled in most of the other major buildings on the Complex.

The Judicial Building, DOT Building, and the Heritage Center complement the State Capitol buildings in their use of wall materials, window and door openings, and general building forms.

The Liberty Memorial Building is an elegant classical and traditional design. This is the only building surviving from the 1920 Morell & Nichols Master Plan that envisioned a highly symmetrical arrangement of buildings about the Capitol Mall.

Window patterns vary within these gray-wall systems, with a strong vertical character to the windows of the State Capitol and DOT contrasting with a strong horizontal character to the windows of the Judicial Building and the Heritage Center. Window and door finishes are often a medium to dark bronze tone, which serves to enhance wall openings. Most of the existing buildings have "flat" roofs that establish the main character, with the Liberty Memorial Building being the only building on the complex with a colonnade and a visible sloping roof.

The State Office Building is a much less dignified, adaptively reused building in the far southeast corner of the Complex. This building is reaching the end of its useful life and is recommended for removal by 2020.

Planning Goals:

- Design new buildings in scale with existing buildings, including their ratio of length to width and their height.
- Use compatible and harmonious building materials.
- Recognize the importance of window and door opening design in relating new buildings to existing architectural character.
- Locate new buildings to continue the development of a compact campus.
- Seek to enhance both the symmetry and the balanced asymmetry of the existing arrangement of buildings and site features.
- Improve building security.



Capitol Tower



Liberty Memorial Building



State Office Building



DOT Building

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS (continued)

SPACE UTILIZATION

Buildings on the North Dakota State Capitol Complex are composed of office, legislative chambers and caucus rooms, museum and library space, as well as miscellaneous support space. In order to develop a master plan for the North Dakota State Capitol Complex, this space and the buildings that house it must be analyzed thoroughly for the following:

- Current size and projections of area.
- Shortfall of area.
- Quality of space.
- Capability of current buildings to provide the space needed.

Departmental projected sizes and necessary proximity are needed to make recommendations for campus growth and to develop current space deficiency corrections. This analysis has been conducted in the following buildings:

- State Capitol - Tower and Legislative Wing.
- Judicial Wing.
- North Dakota Department of Transportation.
- Heritage Center.
- Liberty Memorial Building.
- State Office Building.

Existing Conditions

The existing Capitol Grounds contain the following inventory of features (See the Appendix for more extensive information about space.):

- Six primary buildings containing office and special use space, with
 - 873,753 gross square feet of space, including:
 - 393,707 net square feet of usable office-type space
 - 157,340 net square feet of usable special use space, which includes museum, library, Legislative and Judicial use.
- One Governor's residence and one support building.
- Leased space located in other areas of the city totals 281,744 rental square feet. Of that amount, 86,944 square feet has been identified (See Section 2) as space that should be consolidated on the Capitol Grounds.

The Capitol Grounds currently support:

- 1,780 employees
- An estimated peak load of 400 visitors per day

Seasonally, during the biennial Legislative session, the Capitol Grounds also supports, for the January through April time period:

- An estimated 150 legislators.
- An estimated 105 legislative support staff.
- An estimated 75 lobbyists at any time.
- An estimated 75 adult visitors to the Legislature at any one time.
- Up to an estimated 150 school children visiting the Legislature at any one time.

Analysis of current conditions shows:

- Efficiency of the buildings' useable area averages 63% of the total gross building area (net to gross).
- Density of office-type space use is 221 net square feet per employee.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS (continued)

VEHICULAR CIRCULATION AND PARKING

Analysis of existing circulation patterns reveals a circuitous and potentially confusing experience for both state employees and visitors. Numerous vehicular and pedestrian conflicts, unsafe intersections, and aging pavement suggest a re-evaluation of the overall vehicular circulation system.

Parking conditions are complex due to peak load parking demands during the biennial Legislative Session. North Dakota's harsh winter climate creates challenges when considering parking distribution, walking distances to building entrances, snow removal and storage, and the difficulty in addressing the seasonal Legislative parking needs.

Existing Conditions

The Capitol Grounds currently provides the following parking capacity:

- 1,595 general employee parking spaces for staff and others.
- 113 designated visitor parking spaces.
- 33 "Permit Only" reserved parking spaces.
- 2 Capitol Security spaces, 2 TV Only spaces, 4 – 30 Minutes Parking spaces.
- Approximately 225 unauthorized and unmarked curbside parking spaces located along various internal roadways, used most intensively during the biennial Legislative session.

Analysis of current parking conditions shows:

- General employee and reserved parking spaces are provided at the ratio of 91.5% of all employees.

Planning Goals

- Provide a logical vehicular circulation system that offers clear and logical wayfinding.
- Minimize vehicular and pedestrian conflicts.
- Improve building and site security, especially for drop-off situations and parked vehicles.
- Create convenient, ceremonial entrances for visitors and dignitaries.
- Provide appropriate distribution of parking to reflect the location and population of Capitol Complex buildings.
- Minimize walking distances to primary building entrances.
- Develop pedestrian-friendly, attractive and inviting parking environments.
- Comply with accessibility standards.
- Provide for adequate snow storage areas and parking lot design standards for efficient snow removal.
- Develop signage standards for identification of visitor and employee parking.
- Develop lighting standards to improve security and an attractive, welcoming environment.



Aerial View of NW Parking Area



Aerial View of State Street Entrance



Aerial View of NE Parking Area

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS (continued)

PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

Pedestrian circulation is an important factor in the overall success of a campus environment. The current system is fragmented and unsafe due to numerous road and parking lot conflicts. The Arboretum Trail is popular with lunch time walkers and local school education classes. However, this amenity is antiquated and random in its organization. A significant effort should be made to enhance the overall qualities of the pedestrian circulation system to optimize cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities.

Planning Goals:

- Develop a trail and walk system to highlight recreational, interpretive, and functional opportunities.
- Develop design standards to coordinate the overall system.
- Minimize walking distances from parking areas to building entrances.
- Minimize pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.
- Develop lighting standards for increased pedestrian safety and to extend the usable hours of use of the system.



Existing Arboretum Trail

INFRASTRUCTURE

Recent analysis of the existing mechanical, electrical, and civil systems by facility management staff suggests sufficient capacity to support current and future development. However, a location-specific engineering analysis, preceding each major development, will be prudent.

Lighting plays a significant role in the overall image of the Capitol Grounds. The existing system is inadequate in providing a secure, cohesive nighttime environment. Parking areas, pedestrian walkways, and the Capitol Mall are under lit and create security concerns for users and visitors.

Planning Goals:

- Define primary utility corridors for future development and ease of access for repair and maintenance.
- Strive to create a central maintenance and motor pool facility. Consider a central generation plant for electricity.
- Develop vehicular, pedestrian, and accent lighting standards.
- Develop storm water management guidelines.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Environmental factors play an important role in the overall success of the Master Plan. Consideration should be given to unique topographic features, solar exposure and wind characteristics, as well as soil and groundwater conditions. Sustainable development principles should be considered to preserve the character and quality of the unique environmental features of the Capitol Grounds.

Planning Goals:

- Mitigate poor drainage areas to maximize environmental amenities.
- Utilize unique landforms.
- Optimize pedestrian protection from inclement weather.
- Site future buildings with consideration for solar orientation, energy efficiency, access, and use of existing topography.
- Identify and enhance potential habitat environments.
- Encourage alternative modes of transportation, such as carpooling, mass transit, bicycling, skating, and walking to minimize resource consumption.

INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS (continued)

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER

The North Dakota Capitol Grounds are unique when compared to other state capitols across the nation, due especially to a dynamic diversity of landscape character. However, several concerns are raised when evaluating the existing conditions of the site, including undesirable combinations of native and introduced plant species, high levels of maintenance, lack of year-round appeal, limited perimeter edge treatments, and the appropriateness and location of ceremonial groves and educational or interpretive components. This Master Plan intends to build upon the uniqueness of the Capitol Grounds setting by developing guidelines which will insure the preservation and celebration of the North Dakota landscape, appropriate implementation and maintenance standards, and comprehensive natural quality.

Planning Goals:

- Enhance and build upon unique qualities and diversity of landscape characters.
- Define appropriate plant species.
- Create year-round appeal.
- Define outdoor use areas.
- Reinforce significant processional experiences.
- Develop perimeter edge planting treatment which is sensitive to adjacent land uses and frames view corridors.
- Reinforce the historic nature of the Capitol Grounds.
- Develop and implement a landscape management and maintenance program.

SITE FEATURES AND AMENITIES

The Capitol Grounds provide exciting opportunities for amenities that enhance the overall campus experience, from large group gatherings to singular walks to educational and interpretive displays. Currently, the Arboretum Trail is the main outdoor amenity on the Complex and provides opportunities to view the monument and statue collection, explore different tree species, or enjoy a leisurely stroll. In addition, several open areas are currently utilized for community events or gathering. However, the overall framework for these amenities is underutilized and unorganized, thereby unnecessarily limiting the potential for outdoor features and amenities.



Existing Statues

Planning Goals:

- Develop additional recreational opportunities.
- Reorganize and re-align the Arboretum Trail to better utilize unrecognized areas of the site and enhance educational value of the native environment.
- Develop monument and statue location standards to increase visibility and importance.
- Recommend a strategic approach to location and implementation of the Judicial Grove.
- Increase the visibility and educational value of the Governor's Residence.
- Reintroduce the concept of the Historic Gardens to add to the historic value of the landscape.
- Enhance the main entrance to the Capitol by adding interpretive interest.
- Develop a west-central "Legislative Mall" to celebrate the importance of the Legislative Wing.

SUMMARY OF EXISTING FEATURES

A comprehensive and thorough understanding of the existing conditions provides insight and direction for developing a cohesive Master Plan for the Capitol Grounds. By identifying key planning goals through this analysis, the future of the Complex develops respect for its history, function, and opportunities.