

Penn State Schuylkill



Campus Exterior Architectural Plan
February 2009

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Introduction and purpose

Penn State's Mission:

Penn State is a multi-campus public land-grant university that improves the lives of the people of Pennsylvania, the nation, and the world through integrated, high-quality programs in teaching, research, and service.

To assist in achieving this mission, a Campus Exterior Architecture Plan, known as a CEAP, is developed to suggest ways to improve the exterior aesthetic qualities of campus with low-cost and easy-to-implement concepts that can have meaningful impacts. The CEAP is a planning tool that is an outgrowth of the campus master planning process.

The CEAP includes graphic and narrative descriptions of existing conditions on campus and approximately 15-20 improvement concepts. Positive features may also be identified as elements to emulate.

The improvement concepts are ranked or prioritized according to their visual impact and estimated cost. The concepts are not final designs. Further study and design are required prior to implementation.

Existing Conditions Inventory

Background:

A detailed site analysis, campus vision and future development strategy are fully documented in the campus master plan process. As an outgrowth of the master planning process, a focused visual assessment of the campus exterior can be conducted to establish recommendations and concepts contained in a CEAP document.

General Observations:

The campus is situated on over 40 acres of land between the intensely active Route 61 to the south and the 87.4 acre Rest Haven property to the north . The entrance into campus from Route 61 is relatively unremarkable and would benefit from a heightened sense of arrival. Parking is adequate and, with the exception of the Classroom Building lot, is located at the periphery of the campus, thus minimizing conflicts with pedestrians. There are open areas of lawn and mature stands of trees throughout campus. The strongest element is the east-west mall through the center of campus, which terminates at the Ciletti Library.

Passive and active recreational opportunities are abundant campus wide. There is opportunity for additional improved outdoor gathering spaces for organized activities. Previous plans have been proposed to further develop the landscape surrounding the athletic fields.

Pedestrian circulation in the campus core is functional however the opportunity exists to modify alignments and materials to unify buildings and better organize exterior space. In addition, maintenance, operational and environmental efficiencies could be realized by consolidating and reducing unnecessary, redundant and excessive paved surfaces. Signage and wayfinding at the campus need to be enhanced and standardized. A Sign Program has been developed and is being implemented shortly.

Architecture

Existing Conditions Inventory

Major architectural modifications, additions, and new construction are beyond the scope of this CEAP. However, the aesthetic character of campus is defined to a great extent by the structures that comprised it. Brick masonry is the predominant building material used to construct most buildings on campus.



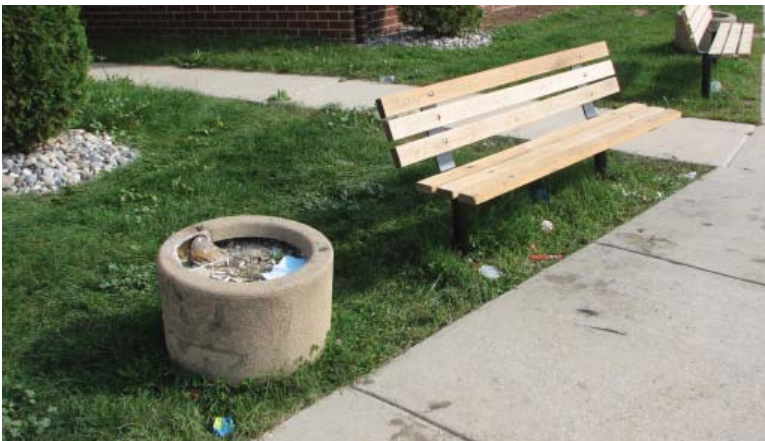
Site Furnishings

Existing Conditions Inventory

Benches, trash receptacles, tables and bike racks across the campus are varied in design, color and material.

It is recommended that a standard design for furnishings be selected that will aid in unifying the campus aesthetic.

In addition to aesthetic appropriateness, the longevity and maintenance of site furnishings should be considered when specifying.





Lighting

Existing Conditions Inventory

A variety of exterior light fixture types are present on campus. As with site furnishings, it is recommended that design standards for parking lot/roadway and pedestrian site lighting be identified and implemented across campus. Full Cut-off luminaires that mitigate light pollution should be used. Metal Halide lamps on pedestrian walkways is recommended.



Signage

Existing Conditions Inventory

Consistent design and placement of directional and identification signs is key to a unified aesthetic as well as an intuitive and clear means of way finding.

Consistent utilization of Penn State graphic standards throughout the system builds the University's identity.

Signage upgrades prompted by CEAP

recommendations made at other Commonwealth campuses has resulted in a complete renovation program at Schuylkill as well. The program is currently in the final approval stage with implementation to follow.





Landscape

Existing Conditions Inventory

The landscape aesthetic of the campus can be characterized as centered on a pleasant central mall with an allee of large, quality specimen trees. Turf areas are relatively weed-free with bare patches visible.

Any and all invasive plant species should be eradicated.

Both formal and informal outdoor gathering spaces exist on campus though there is opportunity for more. Opportunities exist to define the campus entrance sequence and to strengthen the central mall by screening parking areas and adding appropriate landscaping.



Pedestrian Circulation

Existing Conditions Inventory

The system of pedestrian walkways through and around campus appear to have evolved based on pedestrian desire. There is an absence of improved walks in some areas resulting in "cow paths". The use of concrete in lieu of asphalt for walkway surfacing is recommended.



Unique Features

Existing Conditions Inventory

The character and aesthetic of the campus is defined primarily by the central mall and the views across campus from this central tree-lined spine. The campus also has several secondary gathering spaces.



Improvement Concepts

The following figures describe and illustrate possible solutions to specific aesthetic and functional shortcomings on campus, most of which are addressable through the CEAP program. In addition to the recommendations that follow, there are routine maintenance tasks that will enhance the aesthetic appeal of campus. Suggestions include:

- ▶ Mulch landscape beds annually
- ▶ Eradicate weeds and other invasive vegetation
- ▶ Fertilize lawn areas
- ▶ Focus the use of annual and perennial plantings
- ▶ Re-seed lawn areas abutting sidewalks killed by deicing chemicals
- ▶ Seal and re-stripe paved areas
- ▶ Tree pruning and maintenance as recommended by University arborist

An implementation priority matrix has been prepared that lists improvement projects and recommends the order in which the concepts/projects could be executed. The implementation ranking is intended as a guideline for realizing the most significant impacts early in the plan implementation.

Location specific concepts/projects are keyed to the map with numbers corresponding to the listing on the matrix at the end of this report.

1A

Site Furnishings

Improvement Recommendation



Site furnishings designed in a style “family” are aesthetically unifying. The examples shown here will compliment the contemporary architectural style present on the campus. Powder coated metal is attractive, comfortable and durable.

Planters should be appropriately sized for the space they occupy and be constructed of durable, quality material.



1B Replace Mailbox Kiosk

Improvement Recommendation

An opportunity exists to replace the worn and rusted mailbox kiosk at the Nittany Apartments with a new one designed as a double-sided complete unit.



Before



After

1c Ash Receptacles

Improvement Recommendation

The existing cigarette ash receptacles should be replaced with a less conspicuous unit that can be pole mounted where needed, or attached to trash can receptacles. One option is shown below.



Existing



Proposed



Proposed

2 Lighting

Improvement Recommendation

Replacement of any antiquated, inefficient pedestrian walkway and parking lot lighting is recommended. Metal halide lamps in cut-off luminaires mounted to poles are recommended for pedestrian walkways. High pressure sodium lamping is acceptable for parking lot lights. Color/finish for all fixtures should be consistent campus wide. Avoid the use of bollards due to vulnerability to snow removal operations and vandalism.



Parking Lot/Roadway Light



Site Light



Campus Standard

3A

Ciletti Library Improvements

Improvement Recommendation

Enhancements to the Ciletti Library include replacing the building sign with the University standard and match a backing for the clock that would make it much more legible. The masonry surfaces should be repaired as necessary and powerwashed. Replace existing picnic table, trash and cigarette butt receptacles with campus standard furnishing.



Existing



Proposed

3B

Administration Building Improvements

Improvement Recommendation

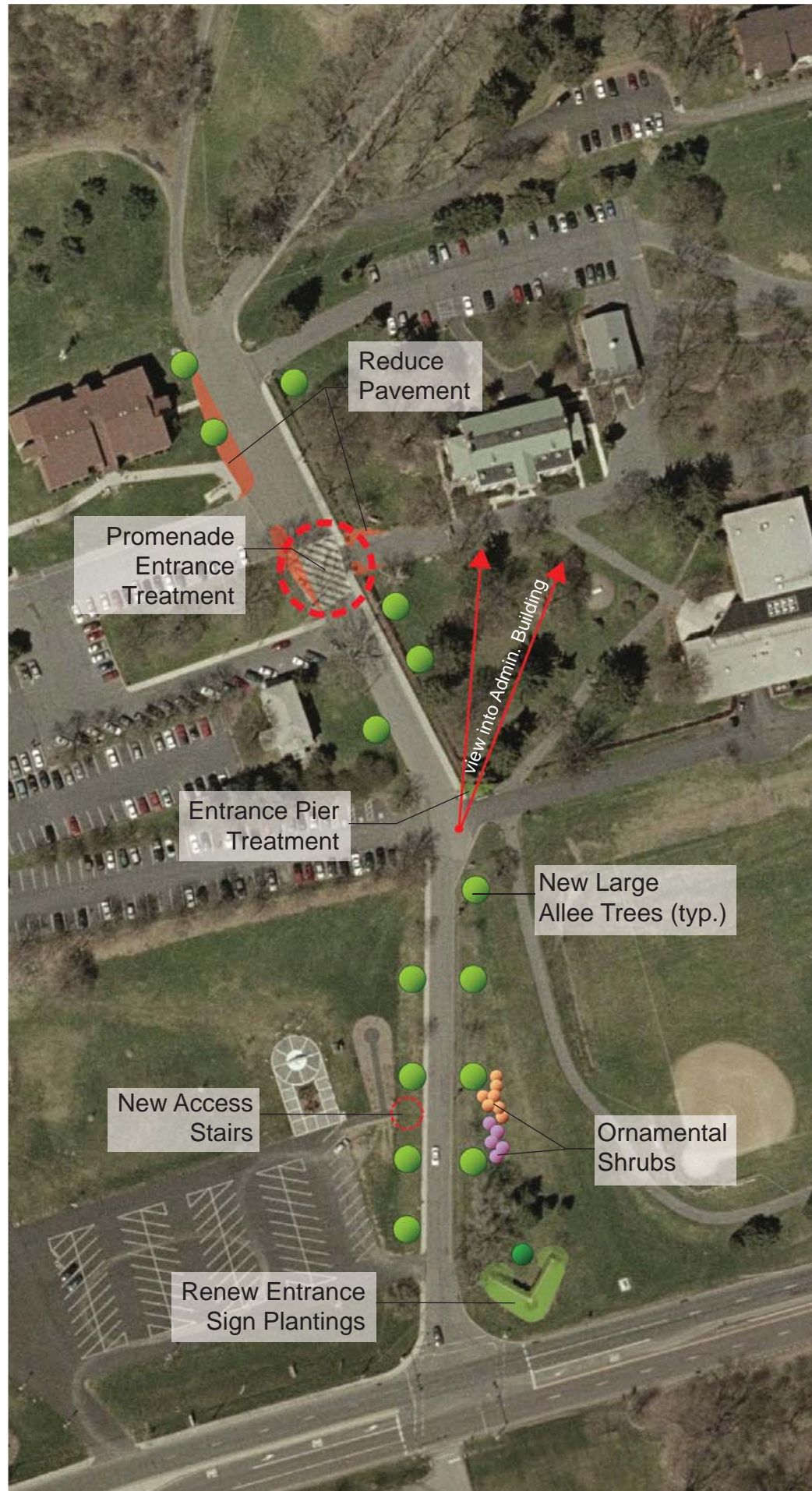
It is recommended that temporary posting cases be removed from the front of the Administration Building per the recently completed sign program.



Existing



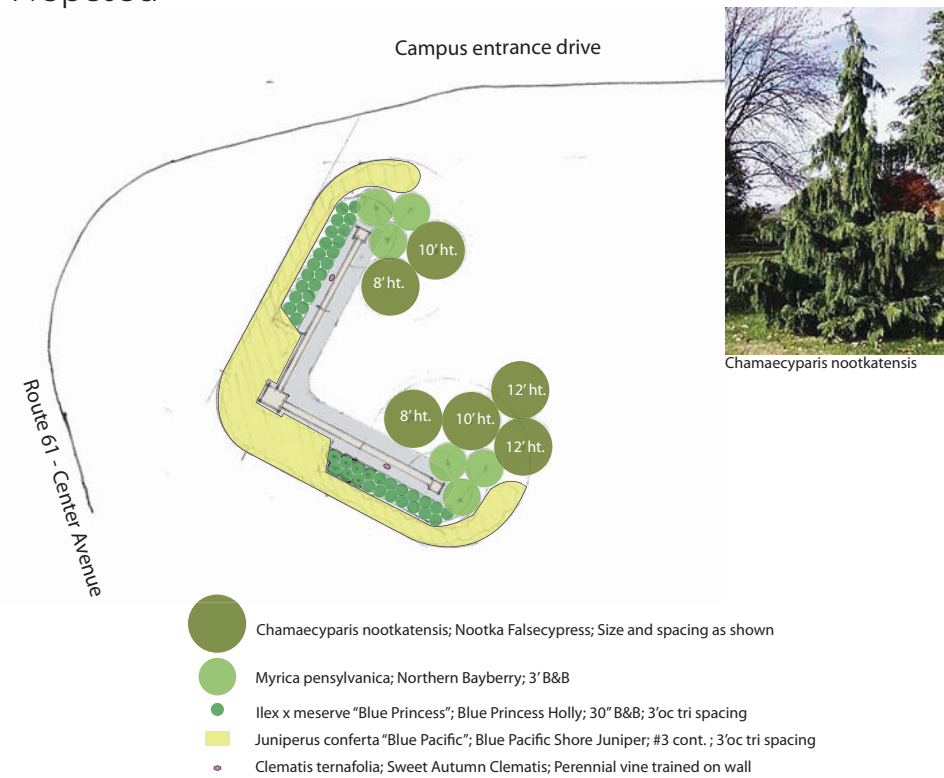
Proposed



Existing



Proposed



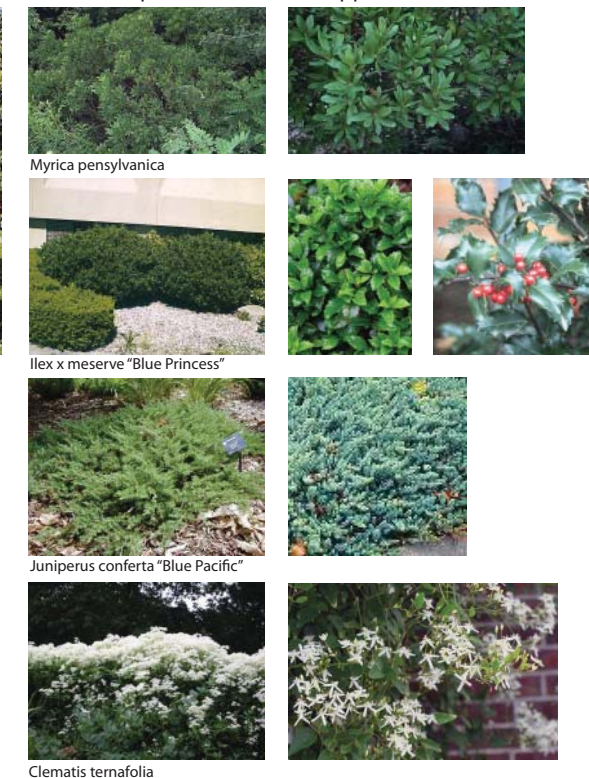
4A Creating a Sense of Arrival

Improvement Recommendation

The landscape character of the main entrance to campus is unembellished and sparse. Positive impact at this front door to the campus requires supplemental landscape plantings including allee trees and shrubs (evergreen and deciduous) along the entrance drive. The plantings around the main entrance sign require renewal.

Establish a view from the entrance drive to the Administration Building. This is only feasible with the removal of end-of-lifespan trees and limbing-up of viable trees.

An opportunity exists to celebrate the entrance onto the campus promenade by enhancing plantings around the stone piers. Excess pavement can be removed to allow for planting bed space surrounding the piers. A belgian block raised crosswalk and paver apron threshold would be a more pleasing and effective way to signal the transition from parking to the campus core. The opposite side of the drive should also be treated to signal a connection to the residence halls. An opportunity also exists to reduce pavement on the opposite side of University Drive, as illustrated.



4B

Remove Invasive Plants- Barberry

Improvement Recommendation

Barberry is extensively used for hedging in the core of campus. Barberry forms dense stands in natural habitats and alters soil pH, nitrogen levels, and biological activity in the soil. Once established, barberry displaces native plants and reduces wildlife habitat and forage. The plant is spread into natural areas by birds that eat the plant berries. All barberry plants should be removed from campus and replaced, where necessary, with other forms of hedging and campus standard post and chain.



Hedges are unnecessary behind the fence along University Drive and need not be replaced.



Hedges should be replaced with non-invasive plantings and post and chain where a physical separation is needed.



UP campus standard for post and chain barrier.



South side of Student
Community Activity
Center

Replace

Remove

Replace

4C Complete Entrance Fence Treatment

Improvement Recommendation

The leaning evergreen tree at the beginning of the Student Community Activity Center service drive is a danger and should be removed. This may also help to open up entrance drive views into the Administration Building. Consider judicious removal of other evergreens in this area to open the view further. An opportunity exists to complete the fence treatment that lines the campus edge along the entrance drive. A stone pier that matches the original campus stone piers should be constructed at the corner and a low landscape treatment should be installed. The swinging gate should be removed.



Existing



Proposed

4D Nittany Apartments Landscape Improvements

Improvement Recommendation

The Nittany Apartments would benefit from a visual separation from the parking lot. This could be achieved with a landscape buffer on the slope adjacent to the parking lot asphalt. A mixture of large shade trees, evergreen shrubs, and flowering shrubs would provide a pleasant transition from parking lot to residential zone. Excess pavement can be removed and planted while maintaining an adequate cart width for parking and emergency vehicles.



Existing



Proposed

4E Gazebo Landscaping

Improvement Recommendation



Existing

Landscape plantings are sparse surrounding the gazebo and the wood chip path leading to it are not universally accessible. A compacted crushed stone path would maintain the rustic character of the context while providing a suitable surface for handicapped users.

The Penn State Dirt and Gravel Roads Studies "Trail Mix Specifications" should be used when specifying materials to assure a compact surface:

http://www.dirtandgravel.psu.edu/resources/dsa/trailmix_spec.pdf



Proposed

Lion Shrine Plantings

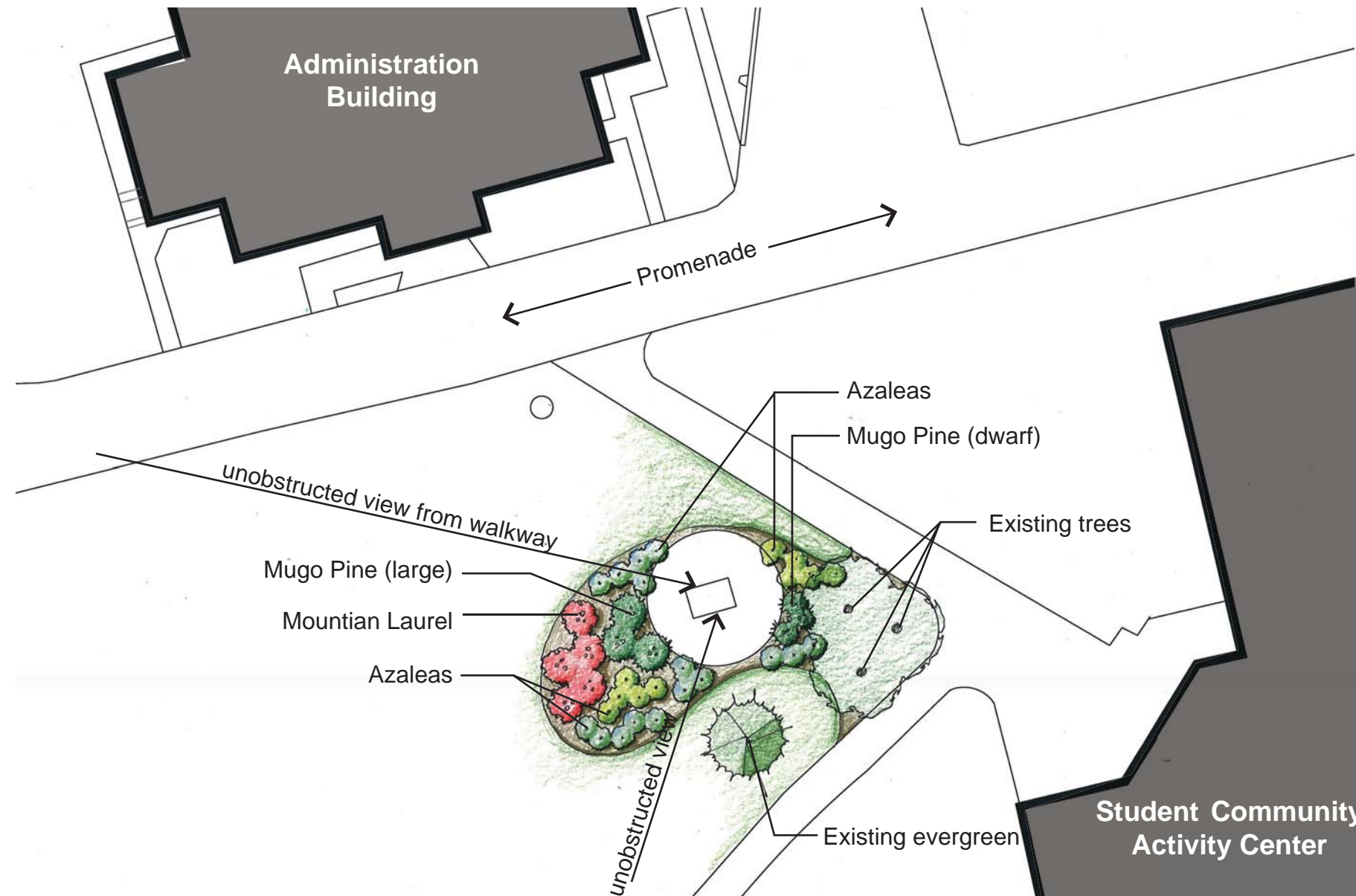
Improvement Recommendation

Graduation day photos at the Lion shrine have become a Penn State tradition. The statue at this campus would benefit from some additional plantings to provide backdrop to the lion. Care should be taken not to obstruct views to the lion from the walkways on either side. May-blooming shrubs would provide color at the right time of year. The mountain laurels also relate the campus icon to its northeastern Pennsylvania setting by echoing the May-blooming shrub that covers much of the surrounding mountainsides.

The stone base of the lion statue itself needs to be repositioned to accurately depict the angle of the lion statue at the University Park campus.



Existing Lion Shrine



Proposed Plantings



University Park Lion Shrine

4G Landscape Business and Academic Services Building

Improvement Recommendation

Excessive mulch makes the mall side of the Business and Academic Building appear barren. The mulched beds should be planted with groundcover or turf at minimum. Shrubs would also ground the building to its site and soften the architectural transition from brick to foundation on this side of the building.



Existing



Proposed

4H

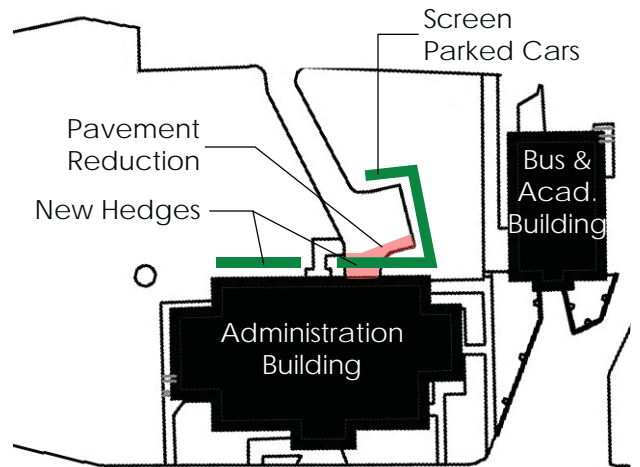
Rear Entrance to Administration Building

Improvement Recommendation

The excessive pavement at the rear of the Administration Building should be removed and hedges installed to screen the utilities against the building.



Existing



Proposed

Student Community Activity Center Improvements

Improvement Recommendation

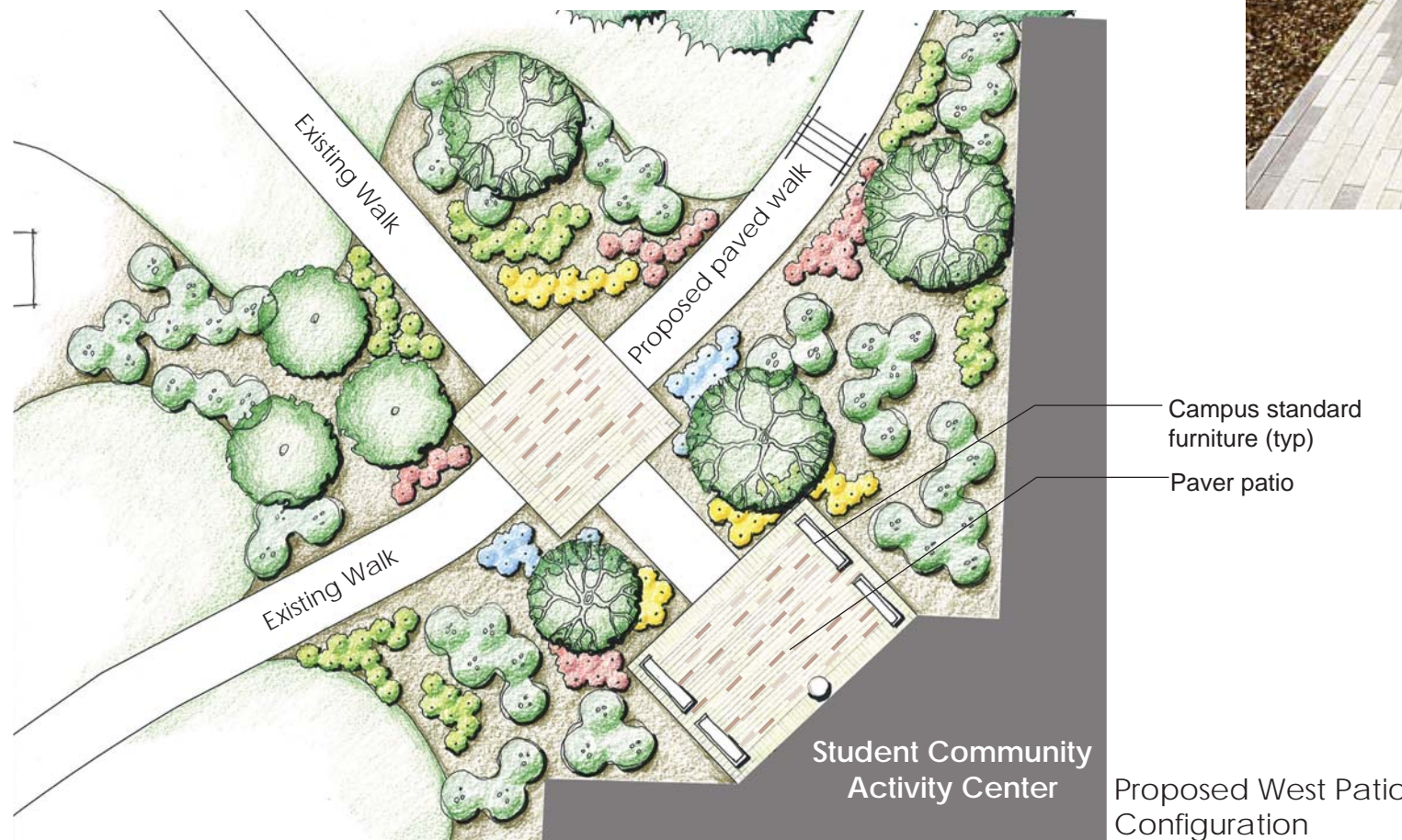
Patios on the east and west sides of the Student Community Activity Center are oversized without providing sufficient outdoor dining and seating space. The proposed reconfigurations respond more sympathetically to the unique architecture of the building and provide outdoor dining space outside of the cafe area.

Narrow linear pavers would echo the proportions of the glass panels on the building.

Large shade trees that provided scale to the building frontages have been removed in the last five years. Large shade and small ornamental trees are proposed to re-establish this relationship. University standard benches and tables in a complementary color would complete the renovation.



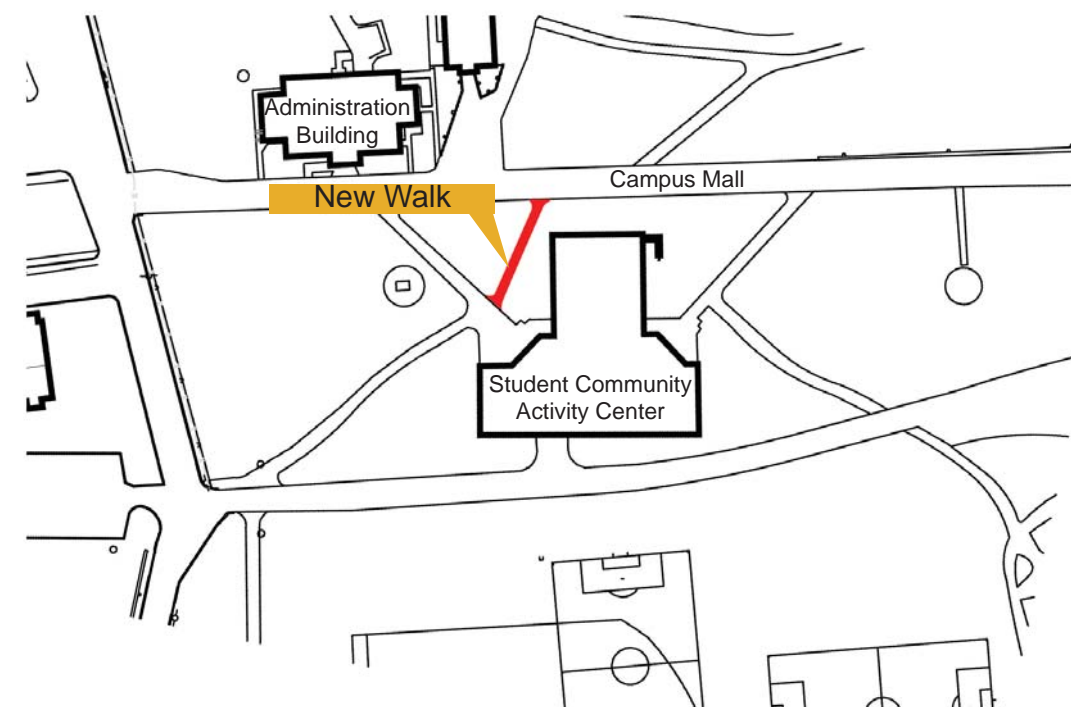
2003 photo of shade tree in front of West Patio



Pave Student Community Activity Center "Cowpath"

Improvement Recommendation

The existing pedestrian circulation network between the mall and the west entrance to the Student Community Activity Center inadequately accomodates movements between these two areas. It is recommended that a segment of walkway be constructed to eliminate the existing short-cut through the lawn. Stairs would be required to negotiate the existing grade change.



Before



After



New concrete walk with stairs

New patio and landscaping highlighted in project 4G

4K Seed Slope Along Mall

Improvement Recommendation



Before

The mulched slope adjacent to the new retaining/seating wall along the mall appears incomplete in the landscape. Shrub and/or perennial plantings would probably be inappropriate for such a long stretch of bed.

Recommend the seeding of the slope with an appropriate grass to complete the transition from the campus green to the new seating wall.



After

4L Screen Parking

Improvement Recommendation

An opportunity exists to screen the Classroom Building parking lot from view. This would especially improve the view of campus from the central mall. Hedges and other plantings would remove the parked cars from view.



Existing



Proposed

4M Landscape Athletic Field Bank

Improvement Recommendation

An opportunity exists to improve the view of campus from Route 61. The addition of trees on the bank on the north side of the athletic fields would soften this view and provide screening for the service functions and dumpsters behind the Student Community Activity Center.



Existing



Proposed

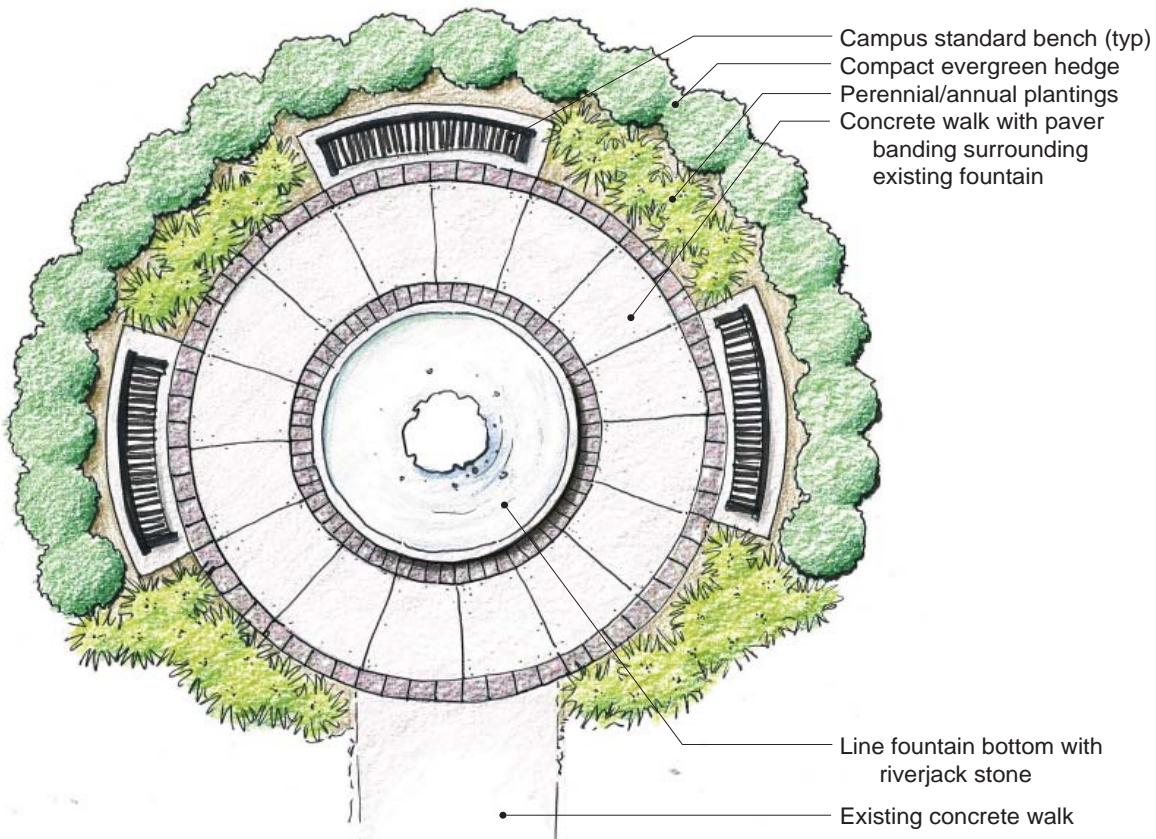
Fountain Landscaping

Improvement Recommendation

The existing fountain is a remnant from original property that was donated to the University in 1966. An opportunity exists to strengthen the visual impact of this central feature. A shallow layer of riverjack stone in the fountain pool to cover piping is suggested. A concrete walk surround is recommended as well as supplemental landscape plantings. Benches would accommodate users wishing to linger.



Existing



40 Tennis Court Slope

Improvement Recommendation



Existing

The slope to the north of the tennis courts would benefit from supplemental landscape plantings to fill the voids. Expanded use of “woody” shrubs and ground cover would eliminate expanses of bark mulch. It is recommended that a landscape architect review the existing scheme and develop a unified landscape plan.

Use of campus standard site furnishings would complete the aesthetic enhancement.



Existing



Existing

4P Steep Slope and Wall

Improvement Recommendation



The steep slope above the wall to the north of the Classroom Building parking should be planted with spreading groundcovers instead of lawn to minimize a potential falling hazard when mowing.

It is recommended that the strip of lawn in front of the wall be planted with shrubs and perennials to break up the visual monotony of the long painted wall



Classroom Building Landscape Improvements

Improvement Recommendation

The west frontage of the Classroom Building is convoluted and visually littered with utility units and service entrances. It would also benefit from separation from the parking lot. This boundary can be better defined by sidewalks and hedging. There is ample space to pull this boundary away from the building to create space for tree and shrub plantings along the building frontage. This would also help to camouflage the utility and service areas surrounding the building.

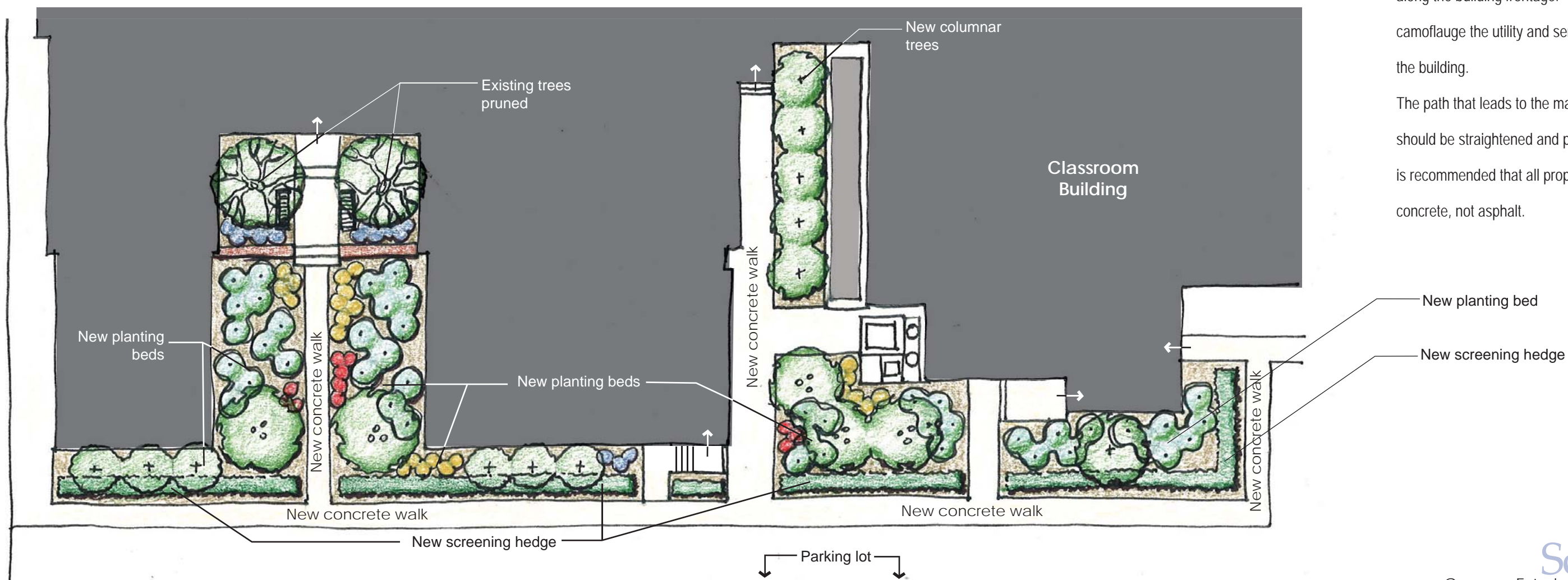
The path that leads to the main west entrance should be straightened and paved with concrete. It is recommended that all proposed sidewalks be concrete, not asphalt.



Existing main west entrance from parking lot



Existing secondary entrance from parking lot



4R

Classroom Building Landscape Improvements

Improvement Recommendation

The east frontage of the Classroom Building is punctuated by an undeveloped courtyard space containing AC units and a secondary entrance into the building. An opportunity exists to create an intimate seating space while structurally unifying the “missing tooth” in the building frontage with hedges.



Existing secondary entrance on east side of building

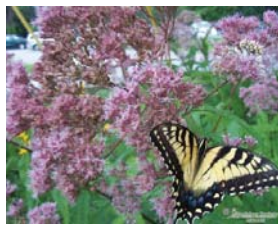


4s

Clear View Into Campus from Route 61 Northbound

Improvement Recommendation

The view into campus from northbound Route 61 can be opened up through a riparian restoration along the Schuylkill River tributary on the campus boundary. Vegetation tall enough to block the view within the zones indicated below, should be removed, and native riparian beneficial plants should be restored.



5A

Screen Dumpsters

Improvement Recommendation

Waste and recycling receptacles are necessary for the management of disposable materials.

Screen enclosures block undesirable views, as well as contain the spread of dumpsters.



Before



After

5B

Remove Satellite Dish

Improvement Recommendation

The satellite dish should be removed if it is no longer functional.



5c

Reduce Pavement

Improvement Recommendation

Excess pavement contributes to excess water runoff and solar heat island effect.

Green space is more visually pleasing than paved surfaces.

The opportunity exists to reduce pavement. A minor vehicular cartway need be no more than 11' in width. The "after" photo below also shows a repaired and cleaned accessible ramp.



Before

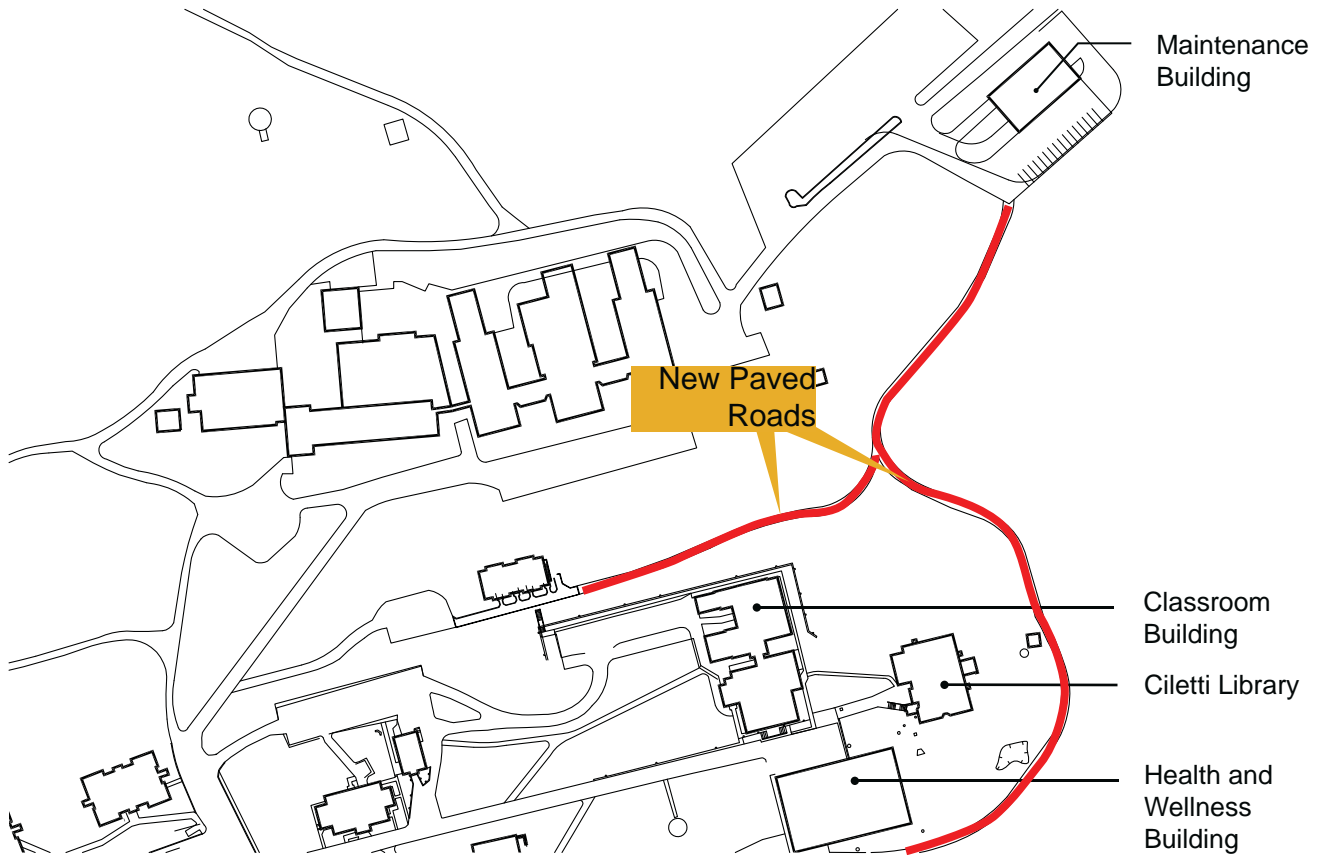


After

5D Pave Maintenance Road

Improvement Recommendation

The dirt access roads to the maintenance building should be paved to reduce dust and maintenance requirements. The paths should be no wider than eight feet, which will accommodate vehicles and snow removal equipment, but won't look like an oversized road through campus.



Existing



Existing

Project Key Map

Penn State Schuylkill
 Campus Exterior Architectural Plan
 Project Prioritization Matrix
 April-09

Proposed exterior improvement projects have been assessed with respect to the following criteria and assigned an implementation priority value.

Criteria include:

Visual Impact - degree to which the project improves the visual quality of the campus

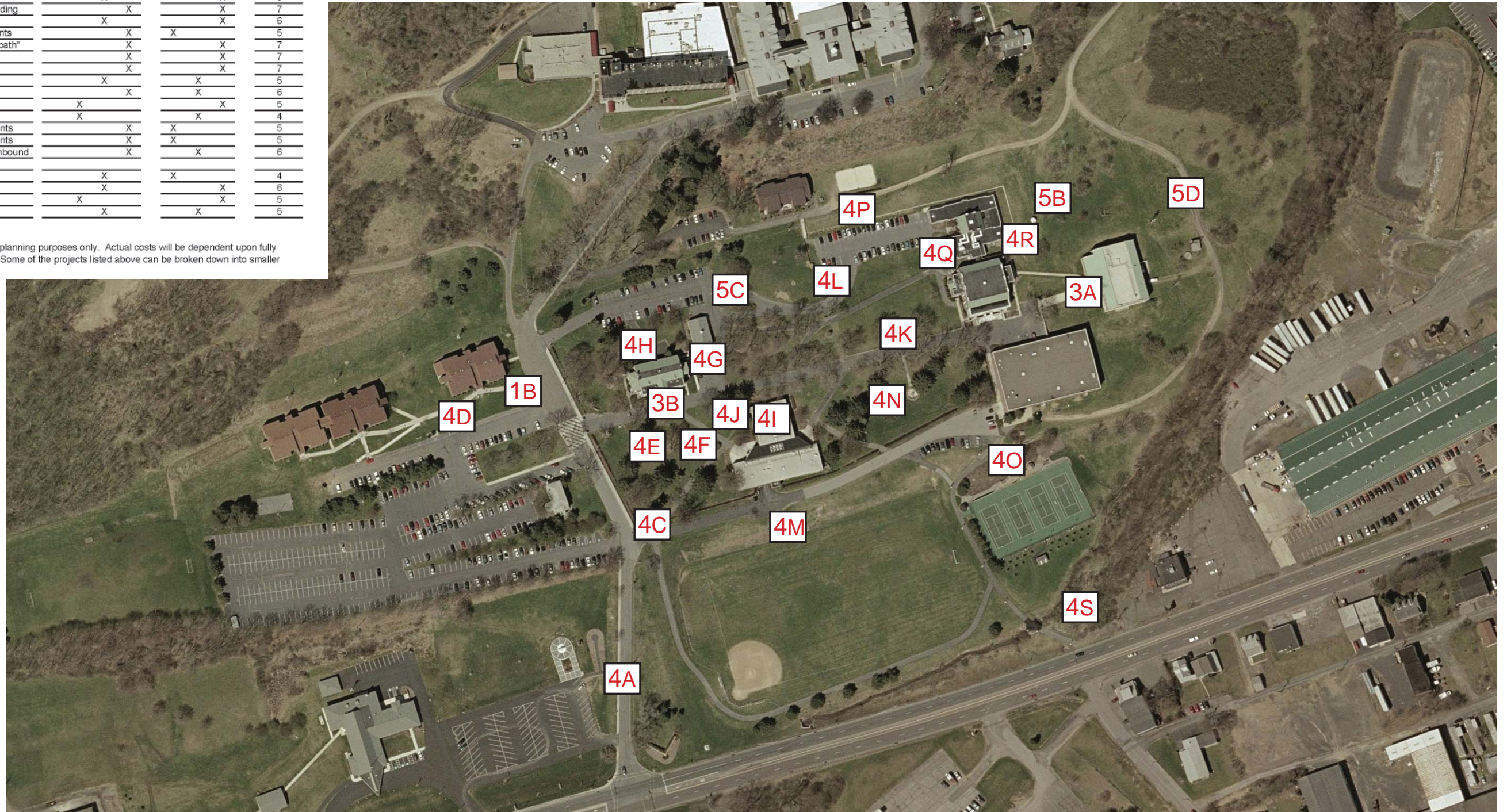
Cost - level of capital investment required to implement the project (assumes no volunteer or donor contribution)

The projects with the highest numeric score should be given the highest priority for implementation

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| VISUAL IMPACT | COST |
| 1 - Little or no impact | 1 - Greater than \$25,000 |
| 2 - Minor Impact | 2 - \$15,001 to \$25,000 |
| 3 - Moderate Impact | 3 - \$5,001 to \$15,000 |
| 4 - Major Impact | |

#	PROJECT	IMPACT				COST			SCORE
		1	2	3	4	1	2	3	
1A	Site Furnishings				X			X	6
1B	Replace Mailbox Kiosk	X						X	5
1C	Ash Receptacles			X				X	7
2	Lighting (campus wide)				X			X	5
3A	Ciletti Library Improvements			X				X	6
3B	Administration Building Improvements		X					X	6
4A	Creating a Sense of Arrival			X		X			5
4B	Remove Invasive Plants - Barberry		X					X	6
4C	Complete Entrance Fence Treatment			X				X	7
4D	Nittany Apartments Landscape Improvements		X				X		6
4E	Gazebo Landscaping		X					X	6
4F	Lion Shrine Plantings		X					X	6
4G	Landscape Business & Acad. Services Building			X				X	7
4H	Rear Entrance to Administration Building		X					X	6
4I	Student Comm. Activity Center Improvements			X		X			5
4J	Pave Student Comm. Activity Center "Cowpath"			X				X	7
4K	Seed Slope Along Mail			X				X	7
4L	Screen Parking			X				X	7
4M	Landscape Athletic Field Bank		X				X		5
4N	Fountain Landscaping			X				X	6
4O	Tennis Court Slope		X					X	5
4P	Steep Slope and Wall		X				X		4
4Q	Classroom Building Landscape Improvements			X			X		5
4R	Classroom Building Landscape Improvements			X			X		5
4S	Clear View into Campus from Rte. 61 Northbound			X			X		6
5A	Screen Dumpsters		X			X			4
5B	Remove Satellite Dish		X					X	6
5C	Reduce Pavement		X					X	5
5D	Pave Maintenance Road		X				X		5

Note:
 Cost ranges identified in this matrix are for planning purposes only. Actual costs will be dependent upon fully developed plans for the respective project. Some of the projects listed above can be broken down into smaller pieces and implemented in phases.



1A, 1C, 2, 4B, 5A Campus wide