

**COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN**

**JUNE 16, 2021**



**THE UNIVERSITY *of***  
**NEW ORLEANS**

TRAPOLINPEER | VMDO

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## MASTER PLAN

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# Master Plan Overview

## Purpose

The University of New Orleans Master Plan was commissioned to address both near-term planning and construction needs while also embracing longer-term interests in better understanding how the 200 acre campus should evolve to address changing trends in higher education, the shifting demographics of the student body, and the changing urban fabric of the City of New Orleans. As such, the master plan scope was simultaneously focused on discreet interventions to aid in establishing a prioritized list of proposed investments to be made today while also casting a far-broader view that sets an aspirational tone for the University's expansion over the next 20+ years.

U.N.O. is unique amongst its peers in many ways. Besides its nationally ranked academic programs, its commitment to diversity and inclusion and its wide range of learning and research opportunities, the campus is situated at the convergence of a rich array of natural and human-made environments. Few Universities can boast of a waterfront location, and fewer still can claim to be situated in a more dynamic ecological setting than U.N.O. During this period of intense scrutiny of our relationship with water, and more broadly, planet earth, the University of New Orleans finds itself at the leading edge of discussions about what it means to be resilient and what needs to be done to occupy this part of Louisiana in a sustainable way. Working with a team of nationally recognized urban designers, landscape architects, strategic planners, and architects, U.N.O. has determined to craft a master plan that emphasizes the importance of growing in a manner that stresses the interrelated and interdependent natural and cultural systems at play.

While the plan is aggressive and the outlook aspirational, the message of the master plan is simple: the intention is to create, "One U.N.O.". That mantra came up repeatedly as we worked together on drafting a set of priorities for the effort. "One U.N.O." suggests that, at its simplest, the University is one community made up of a wildly diverse set of individuals with unique perspectives, needs and desires. It also reinforces the imperative that to excel, all parts of the community must be in dialog and working towards the same goals. The master plan that follows is a representation of that principle. Students, faculty, staff, and administrators engaged in conversations with residents of the city, alumni of the school, business owners, researchers, and design consultants to create a transparent, collaborative and equitable master plan design process that seeks what is best for all parties – not just for the University.

## Process

The design process was intentionally created to front-load the planning effort with an exhaustive investigation of the existing conditions on campus (part 1). Once the design team was confident we understood the present shape of the campus, the state of facilities and infrastructure, and the wide array of academic, athletic and social offerings U.N.O. provides, we launched an intensive series of engagement workshops, casting a broad net in hopes of soliciting as much input as the school and its surrounding neighbors were willing to share (part 2). The challenges of Covid-19 presented themselves immediately, requiring the majority of our interactions to be done remotely. However, what at first was perceived as a limitation of the process became a strength: remote workshops expanded the options for engagement, dialog, and collaboration at our disposal, and yielded meaningful results.

Following the robust analytical and engagement phases of the process, the design team turned its focus to translating all of the data collected and all of the perspectives gleaned from our conversations into a viable plan (part 3). Local partners and national thought leaders worked iteratively to develop a range of partial solutions to the challenges that were beginning to surface. Four areas of focus helped channel the team's inquiries:

**Water and environment.** How will U.N.O. shepherd the natural resources of the site, and how will it help lead the conversation about resilience and sustainability – both in New Orleans and across the globe?

**Connections.** How will the University improve the way it connects people? How does the physical environment facilitate stronger links between students and faculty, between the University and the community? Between the City and the Lake?

**Community.** How and where do people come together? What does community mean in the digital age? How can campus encourage communal gatherings?

**Education.** What are U.N.O.s strengths and how can the plan continue to improve them? Where are academic weaknesses and how can the plan bolster them?

Ultimately, these themes wove their way through the various aspects of the final plan and helped guide the University in its decisions about what to promote strongly and what became secondary foci. The plan slowly emerged from our conversations about these issues and began to make sense in a way that felt inevitable: Infrastructure and landscape would play a major role in shaping the organization of the plan, facilities would infill that structure when funding, enrollment and missions aligned, and programs and policies would be drafted to strengthen the way the physical aspects of the master plan operate. Together, these three major categories of work would fulfill the promise of the “One U.N.O.” entreaty and would be able to clearly articulate a direction for the campus for many years to come.

## Proposal

Our proposal for the future of U.N.O. is built upon the principle of connection. The plan proposes to improve the existing pathways for connection within and across campus while introducing new means to connect to the more remote reaches of the large urban campus and outward into the community. The connections established by the plan can be described as the following:

**Connecting precincts.** The master plan proposes a major urban intervention along Leon C Simon Blvd to better connect core campus to U.N.O.’s east campus. Additionally, the plan establishes a number of new pedestrian connections between core campus and the Research and Technology Park.

**Connecting to the neighborhood.** The edges of campus become both better defined and more porous. The boundaries between campus and neighborhood are articulated with welcoming public pathways and places to sit and linger. A proposed mixed-use building at the intersection of Leon C Simon and Elysian Fields Avenue would serve both students and community members.

**Connecting to the site and nature.** At the heart of the master plan is the idea that one of the University’s greatest strengths is its geographic location and its relationship to a unique coastal / riparian ecosystem. The framework of landscapes and infrastructure that undergird the plan reinforce the pivotal relationship U.N.O. has with water and the other natural resources on campus.

**Connecting people and programs.** Without the students, there would be no need for a campus. Their success, and the opportunities the University provides for their growth and maturity are the most important facet of the master plan. The design of the plan strives to make learning opportunities more visible and more accessible for the entire community of learners.

The plan presented in the following pages is explained in three separate but related layers. Diagrams help highlight the essence of the design and strive to make the complexities of the plan simple to understand at a glance. Next, aerial renderings depict the entirety of the plan and illustrate the larger scale motivations of the design. The vantagepoint of the views in this section rotate around the periphery of the campus, revealing different precincts within the plan and highlighting the specific projects proposed across the University grounds. The third section places the viewer directly on the ground and focuses its lens on the landscapes and buildings at the center of campus. The images created of these spaces and places are meant to capture the unique spirit of U.N.O. and will hopefully serve as an inspirational collage of what the campus could feel like in the coming years.

As one might imagine, a project of this scale requires the time, energy, and talents of a large group of individuals. We’d like to thank the following groups for their contributions to the master plan effort. Their dedication to the University and the City it calls home was an inspiration, and guided the work that follows.

The Master Planning Committee  
U.N.O Project Team  
The Deans of U.N.O.  
Faculty and Staff  
Students  
The U.N.O. Community  
U.N.O. Alumni

# 1

## AREAS OF FOCUS

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Using the input received during our public engagement process, and referencing the data collected about the campus through our assessment, the team set about establishing specific areas of focus to begin the design efforts.

- Water
- Connections
- Community
- Education

These four topics provided solid footing for the explorations that ensued, and helped organize what would have been an unweildy amount of information into a useful set of design observations.

# Internal Design Charrette

Exhibits from our internal design charrette. Members from across our design partnerships collaborated on developing a first pass at creative solutions to the challenges established during assessment and engagement portions of the master plan. The following pages summarize the key findings related to each of these **4 major areas of focus**.

## 1 WATER

### Water (Ecology/Resilience)

**Vision Statement**

Wayfinding and campus identity are clarified and enhanced by differing zones of water management features and native plantings.

**Key Support**

- Improve the water management systems, facility and staff
- Improve the water management systems, facility and staff
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**Concept Schematic - "Loops and Bands"**

Loop the city into campus

- East - West Bands
- North - South Connections
- Remaining Spaces

**IDENTITY**

Box as way to connect to city

## 2 CONNECTIONS

### Movement/Connection (includes transportation)

**Vision Statement**

The goal of the master plan is to improve the bonds between people and place. The vision statement is to improve the bonds between people and place.

**Priorities**

- Identify projects that reduce the transitional nature of the current campus
- Pursue projects that help improve the visibility of UNO within the community
- Develop designs that embrace a regional outlook on biodiversity and environmental health
- Consider all stakeholders in the development of a plan of programs and offerings that will allow more people to enjoy the city
- Adopt design strategies that allow access but provide security

**MP option 1 PLAN GOALS**

- REINFORCE LAKEFRONT ENTRY
- MODIFY PARKING (LANDSCAPE CONNECTION TO LAKE)
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DEFINES LATERAL PATHWAYS
- EXTEND AND CONTINUE TO IMPROVE THE QUAD
- INVEST IN LEARNING COMMONS (NEW ENTRIES - DIVERSIFY PROGRAMS)
  - MAKESPACE
  - TUTORING
  - ACADEMIC SUCCESS
  - GRAD LOUNGE
  - GALLERY
- VACATE LEON C SIMON FRONTAGE (PROMOTE PARTNER'S VISIBILITY)
- REACHFRONT ACCESS
- MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT (OPTION 1)
- REINFORCE FRONT DOOR
- SHARED RECREATION FIELDS
- CAMPUS BEACON (MARIQUEE)
- CREATE PUBLIC WALKWAY THROUGH CAMPUS

## 3 COMMUNITY

### Community (Identity and Gathering)

**Vision Statement**

Community (Identity and Gathering)

**PLAN GOALS**

- REINFORCE LAKEFRONT ENTRY
- MODIFY PARKING (LANDSCAPE CONNECTION TO LAKE)
- GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE DEFINES LATERAL PATHWAYS
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## 4 EDUCATION

### Education (Teaching/Learning/Research)

**Vision Statement**

Education (Teaching/Learning/Research)

**Overall Building Comments**

**Library Comments**

**Goals**

- Renovate current building fabric
- Buildings + services should reflect the quality education gained at UNO
- Provide better and additional community gathering + learning areas
- Improve building + outdoor
- Productive learning environments - for faculty and students
- Each academic dept. has a quad/terrace space + courtyard + identity

# 1 Water

## Summary of Key Findings

**The coastline of New Orleans is always changing.** A resilient campus plan and design strategies will accommodate change, e.g., in sea level, salinity, waterfront development.

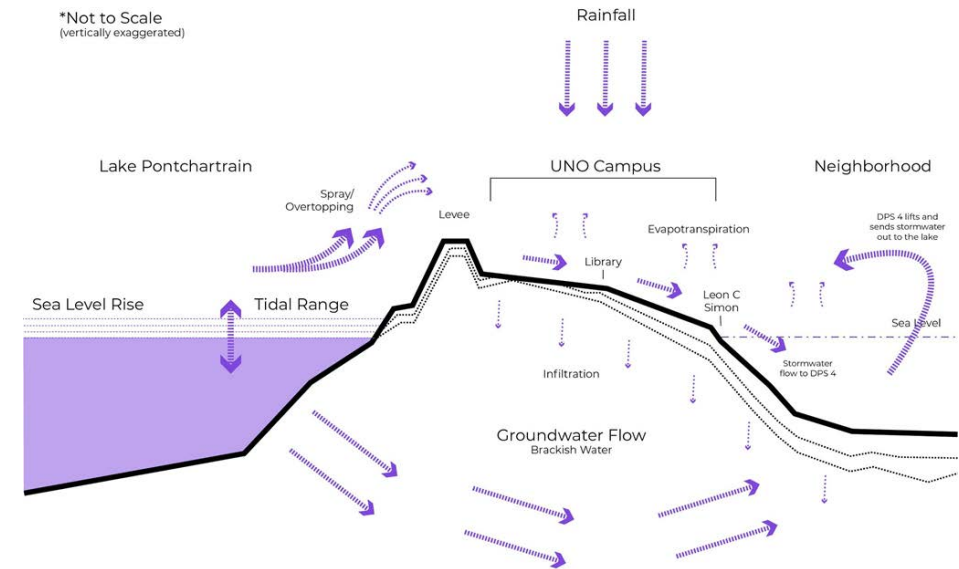
**U.N.O. occupies a ridge** and slopes down towards the low-lying St. Anthony neighborhood. This means reducing stormwater runoff from U.N.O. will benefit not just U.N.O., but the rest of Gentilly as well by alleviating the load on Drainage Pump Station 4.

**See U.N.O. as part of a broader ecology.** Understand it as part of a changing coastline, as part of the intercontinental Mississippi Flyway, as a landscape of oaks and cypresses and other trees that will outlive most of us. We can develop urban design strategies that relate to these longer time frames, and U.N.O.'s community as stewards of a particular lakefront ecosystem.

**Parking is/is not the problem.** Massive parking lots result in large volumes of runoff. A decisive shift towards a multi-modal campus where parking occupies far less space will radically reduce U.N.O.'s stormwater impact on the city.

**Direction 1: Keep parking as is,** but retrofit with large amounts of green infrastructure. This may be effective in reducing runoff and improving water quality, but will likely be cost prohibitive in terms of both initial investment and long-term maintenance costs.

**Direction 2: Invest in a multi-modal campus** that substantially reduces parking needs. Depave unnecessary parking areas and planting low-maintenance landscapes will be high impact and have lower maintenance costs.



Campus Hydrology Diagram



Proposed Planting Overlay



## 2 Connections

### Summary of Key Findings

**Movement on campus prioritizes private commuter car access.** The current commuter culture prioritizes car circulation and close parking to all buildings on campus over safe, pleasant pedestrian access and improved public transportation. This inflates the importance of parking and roadways, as well as perpetuates inequity in access to campus.

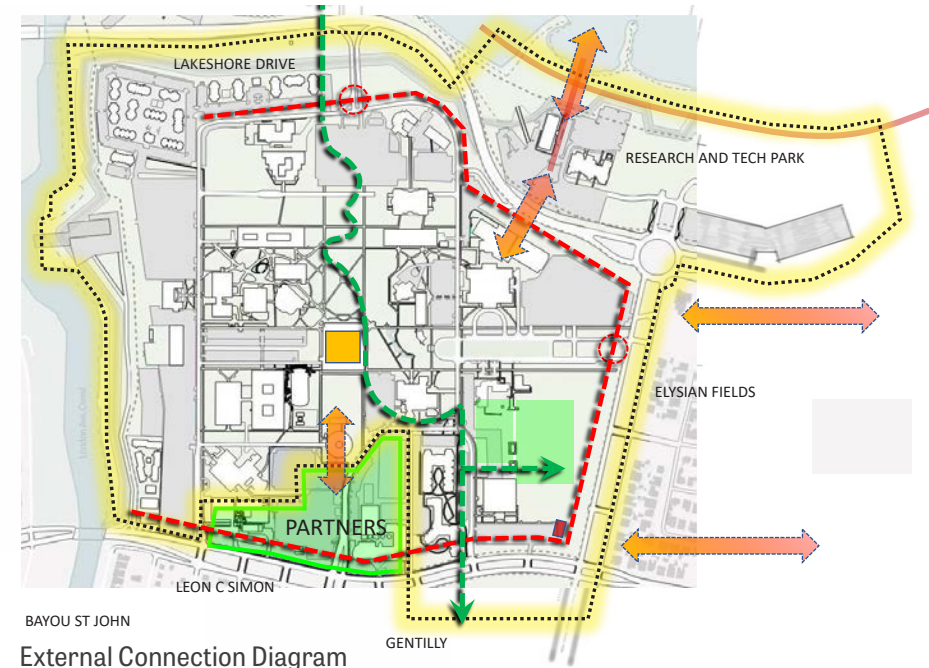
**Campus feels unwelcoming** due to unclear wayfinding, closed entrances, unclear destinations for visitors, and inadequate U.N.O. presence along the main roads.

**Accessibility is complicated** by inconsistent path environments, frequent flooding, and absence of safe, pedestrian connection to buildings and destinations on campus.

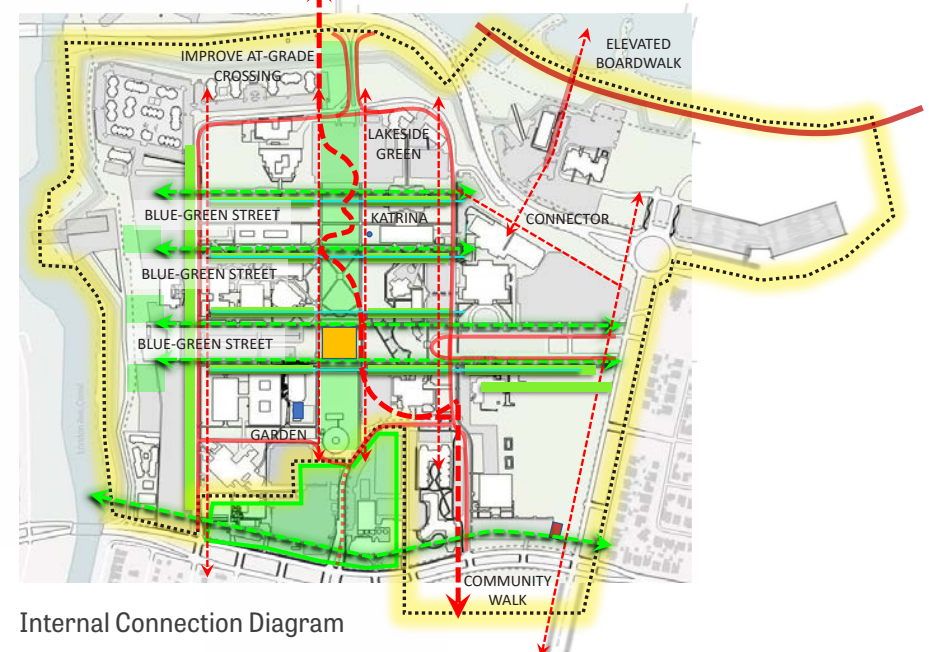
There is both a **physical and mental disconnect between U.N.O. and the surrounding neighborhood and city.** Visitors need a reason to come to campus, and students need to have better support in accessing the city.

**Moving between the different campuses (East, West, R+T Park) is difficult and undefined.** Safe, pedestrian connection could increase students' use of athletics facilities and research park.

**Access to lake has not been prioritized.** The lake is a potential destination for recreation and an educational asset to serve both the university and city.



External Connection Diagram



Internal Connection Diagram

### 3 Community

## Summary of Key Findings

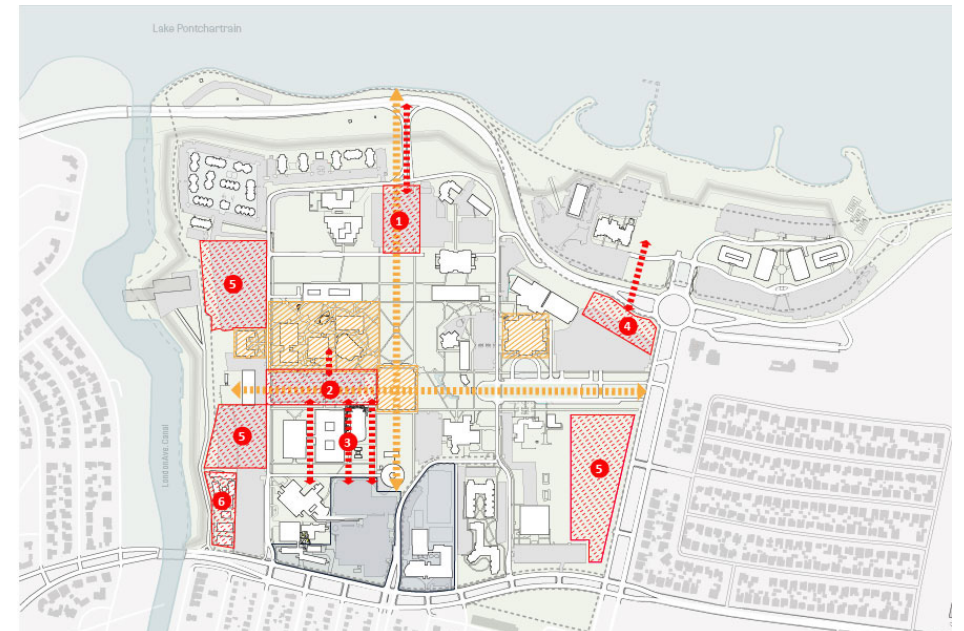
**The University of New Orleans lacks a sense of welcome.** Improvements to entries, a consistent approach to internal wayfinding, and a consistent handling of landscape spaces and building communities can help broaden the appeal of campus.

**Spatial clarity is limited.** Developing a clear hierarchy of spaces can help distinguish formal and informal gathering spaces from secondary spaces.

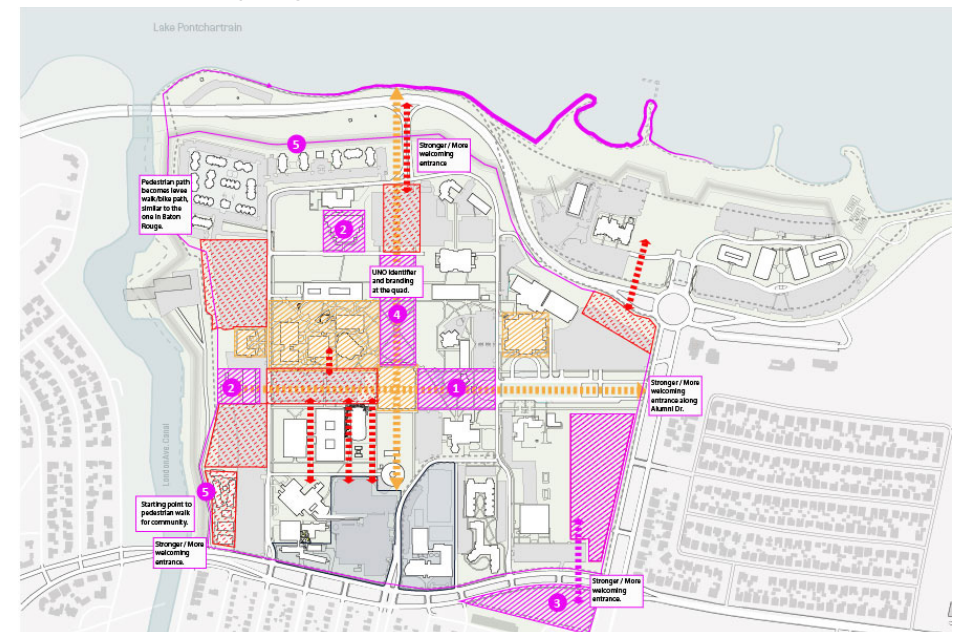
**Community Identity could be improved.** Better “branding” and a focus on cohesive design elements can help stitch disparate parts of the campus design language together into a more impactful campus image.

**Parking is part of the problem.** The number of parking lots and the sheer area of campus covered by asphalt gives the impression that life is designed around the automobile. Getting people out of their cars and into the many great campus spaces is imperative.

**Establishing a strong center can help reinforce a communal sense of identity and belonging.** The Earl K Long Library is the place to invest in.



Areas of Opportunity Diagram



Neighborhood Connections Diagram

## 4 Education

### Summary of Key Findings

**Teaching and Learning on Campus is transactional.** Like other aspects of life at U.N.O., students and faculty arrive for services and depart when they've been provided.

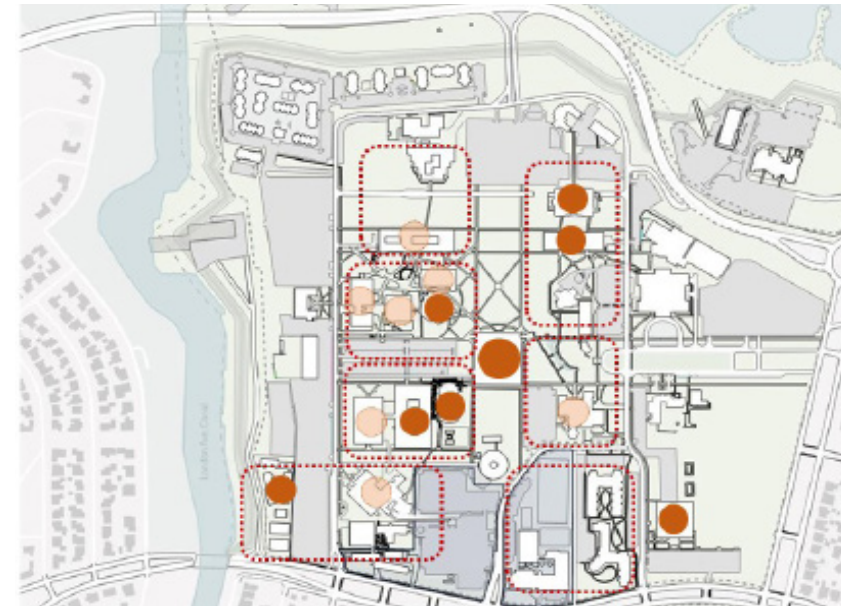
**Students and faculty experience varying levels of isolation.** Inter-departmental interaction is limited, both for instructors and for learners.

**Learning spaces are adequate but need updating.** The learning space assessment indicated that classroom utilization rates are acceptable, but that the spaces themselves would benefit from updated furnishings and equipment.

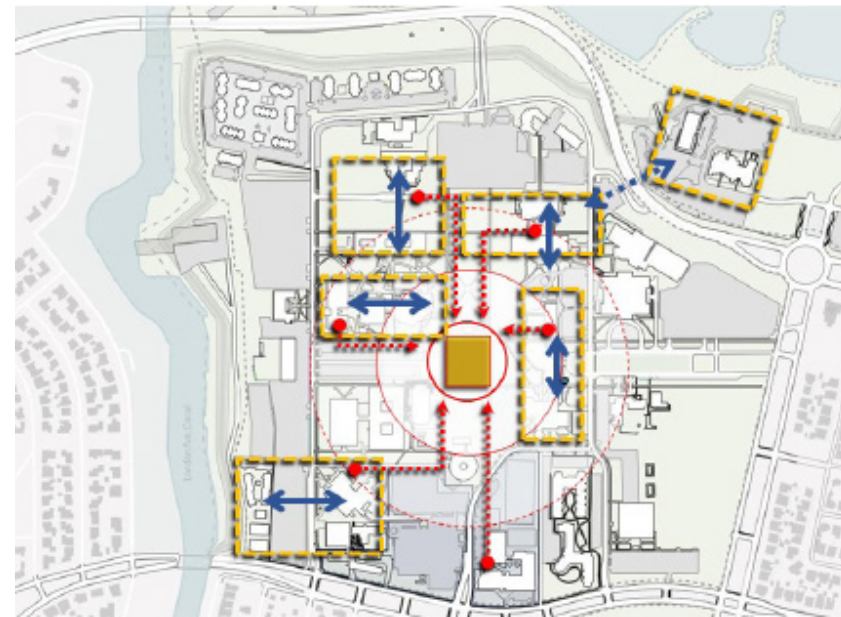
**Technology infrastructure needs to be consistent across campus and academic program spaces.** The handful of technology-rich spaces are popular, but not well distributed. Instructors need supplemental training to utilize spaces to their fullest potential.

**Indoor and outdoor learning space should be considered simultaneously.** Surveys and workshops revealed a real interest in both improving indoor learning environments and expanding outdoor ones.

**Learning spaces are not consistently inspirational and innovative.** A comprehensive renovation schedule is needed to overhaul dated and tired classrooms, labs and lecture halls.



Renovations Opportunity Diagram



Academic Program Neighborhoods diagram

# 2

# MASTER PLAN STRUCTURE

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The Master Plan for the University of New Orleans was developed in three distinct but related areas.

- **Framework.** The framework of the master plan is comprised of landscapes and infrastructure that form the backdrop of the campus.
- **Facilities.** The buildings and spaces within them are the focus of the sound portion of the master plan.
- **Programs, Partnerships and Policies.** The methods by which U.N.O. can enhance the ways it serves students, faculty, staff, and the entire community.

# Master Plan Structure

## Landscape

- Create new outdoor gathering spaces (the quad, water garden, beach)
- Express new stormwater measures (central quad, green strands)
- Tree Campus USA designation; arboretum

## Infrastructure

- Upgrade path network and cross-campus links
- Adjust road alignments and parking to favor pedestrian accessibility
- Implement energy saving measures

## FRAMEWORK



## Architecture + Space Planning

- Enhance and expand the Library into a Learning Commons
- Renovate learning spaces across campus
- Expand arts venues

## FACILITIES



## Academics and Student Life

- Create environmental study center/arboretum and develop supporting partnerships
- Invest in student and faculty/visiting professor housing


## Community

- Create a public interface with the surrounding neighborhood – park and field
- Publicize campus events – marquee and outreach
- Develop mixed-use project(s) to benefit community and campus


## PROGRAMS, PARTNERSHIPS + POLICIES




# Comprehensive Plan

**FRAMEWORK** 

Landscape  
Infrastructure

**FACILITIES** 

Architecture  
Space Planning

**P-P-P** 

Programs  
Partnerships  
Policies



# FRAMEWORK

Landscape

Infrastructure



1

The master plan framework includes aspects of design that convey people into and across the campus. It also includes all of the natural and manmade landscapes that, taken together, serve as the backdrop for life on campus.

Quad improvements

Walk and path coordination

Establish learning communities

Address parking islands

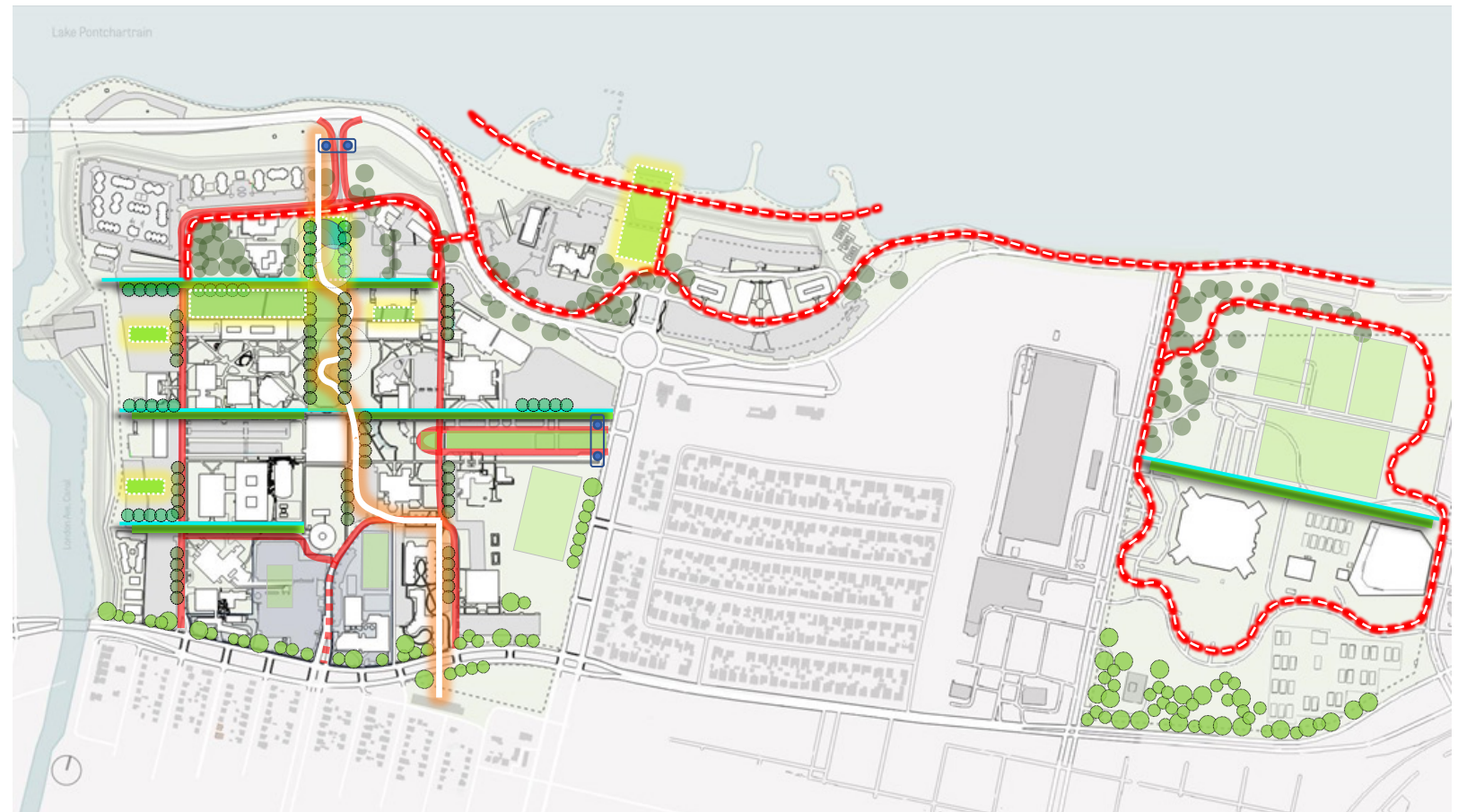
Public park + path

Zoned campus plantings

Campus connectors

Beachfront link

Lakefront park planting



# FACILITIES

Architecture

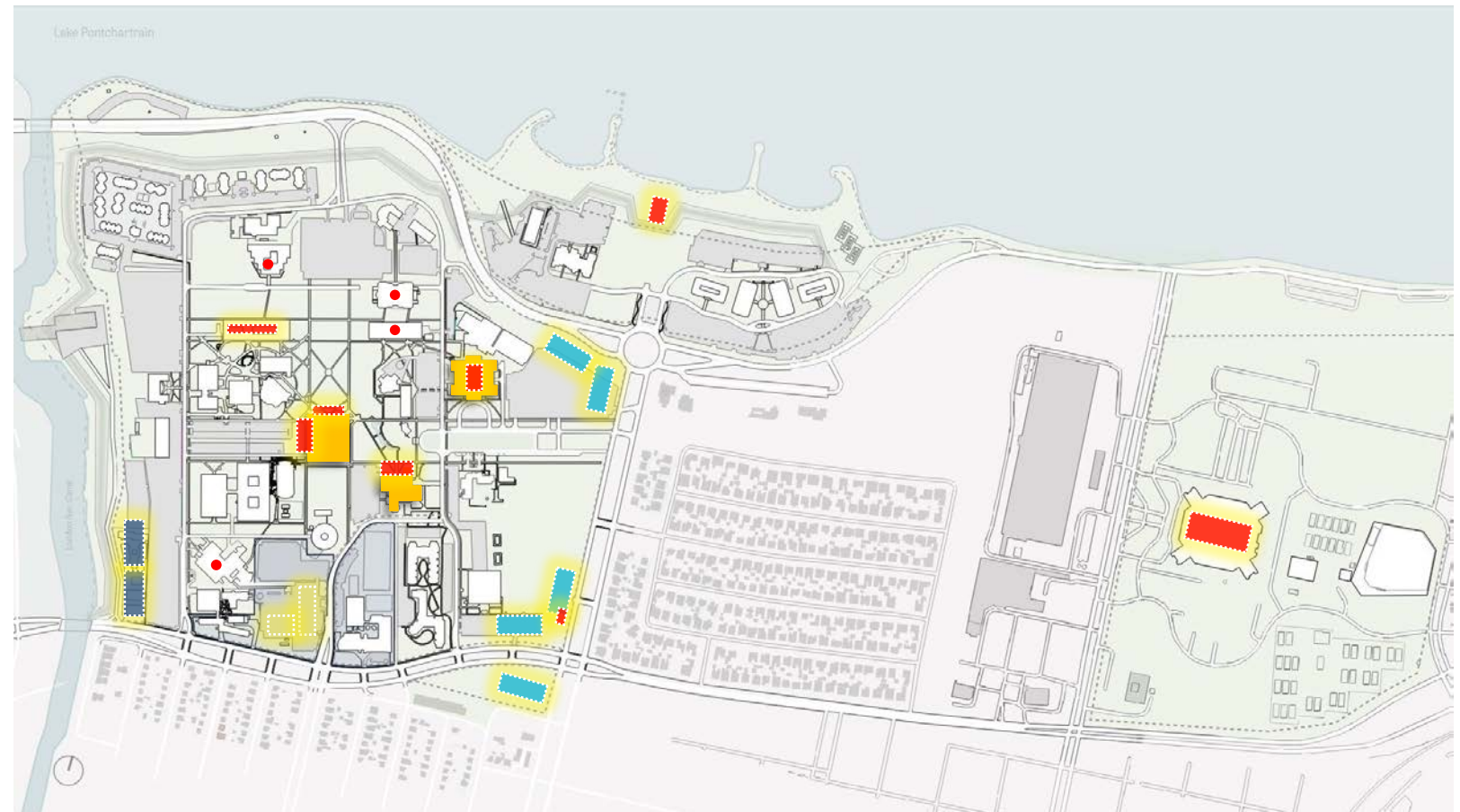
Space Planning



2

A careful study of all buildings and programs on campus yielded a list of priority renovation, addition and new building projects that are necessary to help U.N.O. achieve its vision for the future.

- Learning commons expansion
- University center improvements
- Performing arts center expansion
- Student housing improvements
- Liberal arts renovation
- Future Hynes
- Mixed - use academic
- Commercial
- Lakefront academic building





# P-P-P

Programs

Partnerships

Policies



3

U.N.O. programming, and partnerships across and beyond campus and policies to enhance living and learning at U.N.O.

Expand Performance/Gallery Calendar

Develop Shared STEM Facility

Court Development Partners for mixed - use

Extend student support services

Increase sharing agreements w/ partners

Expand on-campus experiential learning

Housing policy to support living on campus

Partner with state arboretum

Expand print and online presence



# 3

## THE “ONE U.N.O.” PLAN

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Through the normal course of interactive planning and design engagements with the university during the master planning process, one of the administrators suggested that if the work we were doing on the master plan didn't result in “One U.N.O.”, then we would have missed the mark. The feeling was that the central aim of the planning effort had to be the prioritization of connecting all of the precincts, programs and people on campus into one, thriving entity with a unified identity it could present to the city, the region and the world.

From that point on, the rally cry became, “One U.N.O.”. It accurately reflects the master Plan's goal of stitching tenuously connected aspects of life on campus - and between campus and the surrounding community - together.

# DIAGRAMS

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The following pages illustrate the core concepts at the heart of the master plan. Each diagram isolates a specific characteristic of the plan and shows both the existing conditions we see on campus today, and the proposed developments/ enhancements articulated in the master plan. The hope is that, by separating-out each individual category, what is in reality a highly complex system of interrelated parts becomes easier to understand, and improvements easier to act upon.

# Campus Buildings

EXISTING



# Campus Buildings

EXISTING



There are 44 buildings on campus today, comprising a total of 1.5+ million square feet of space. This diagram illustrates the various types of building by color and highlights the distinct residential, academic, and research zones, including the BFHS complex of buildings along the south edge of campus.

- Housing
- Academic
- Support
- Research and Tech Park
- Partners
- Recreation + Fitness
- Student Life

# Campus Buildings

PROPOSED

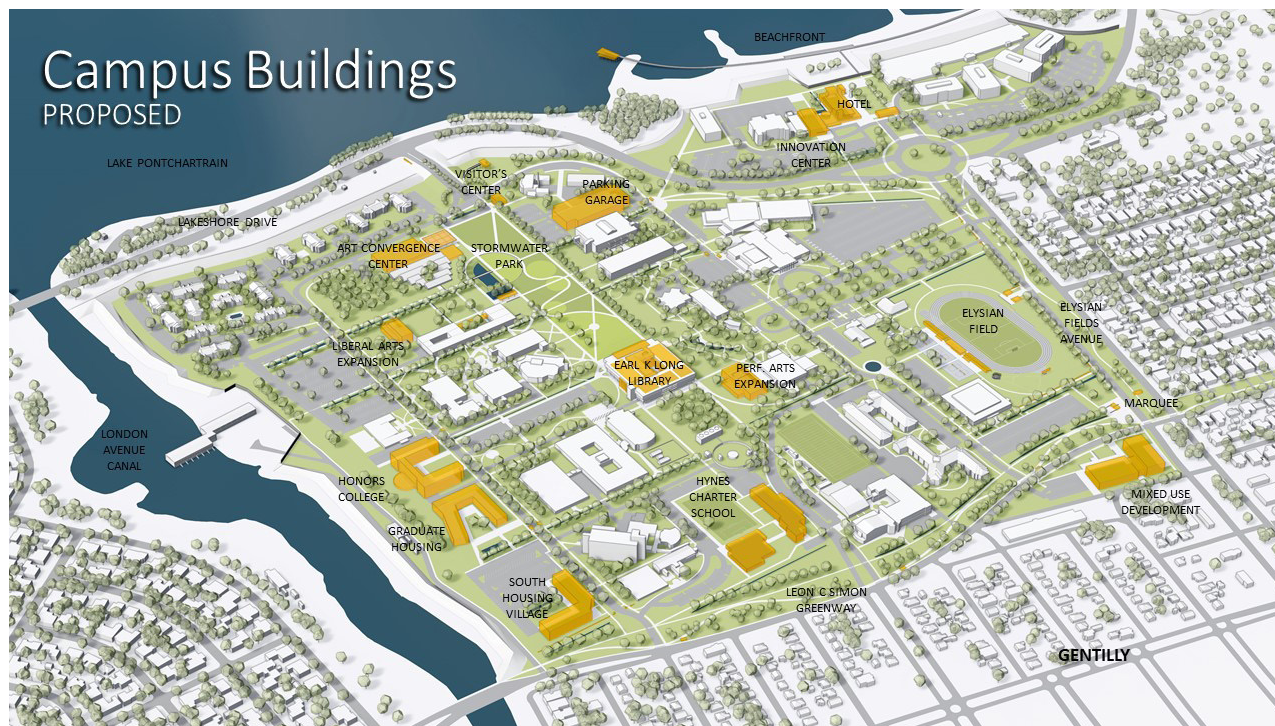


Diagram two isolates the new building projects proposed in the master plan and described in the following pages.

The plan distinguishes three categories of proposed work:

- Renovated existing buildings and spaces
- Additions to existing buildings
- New buildings

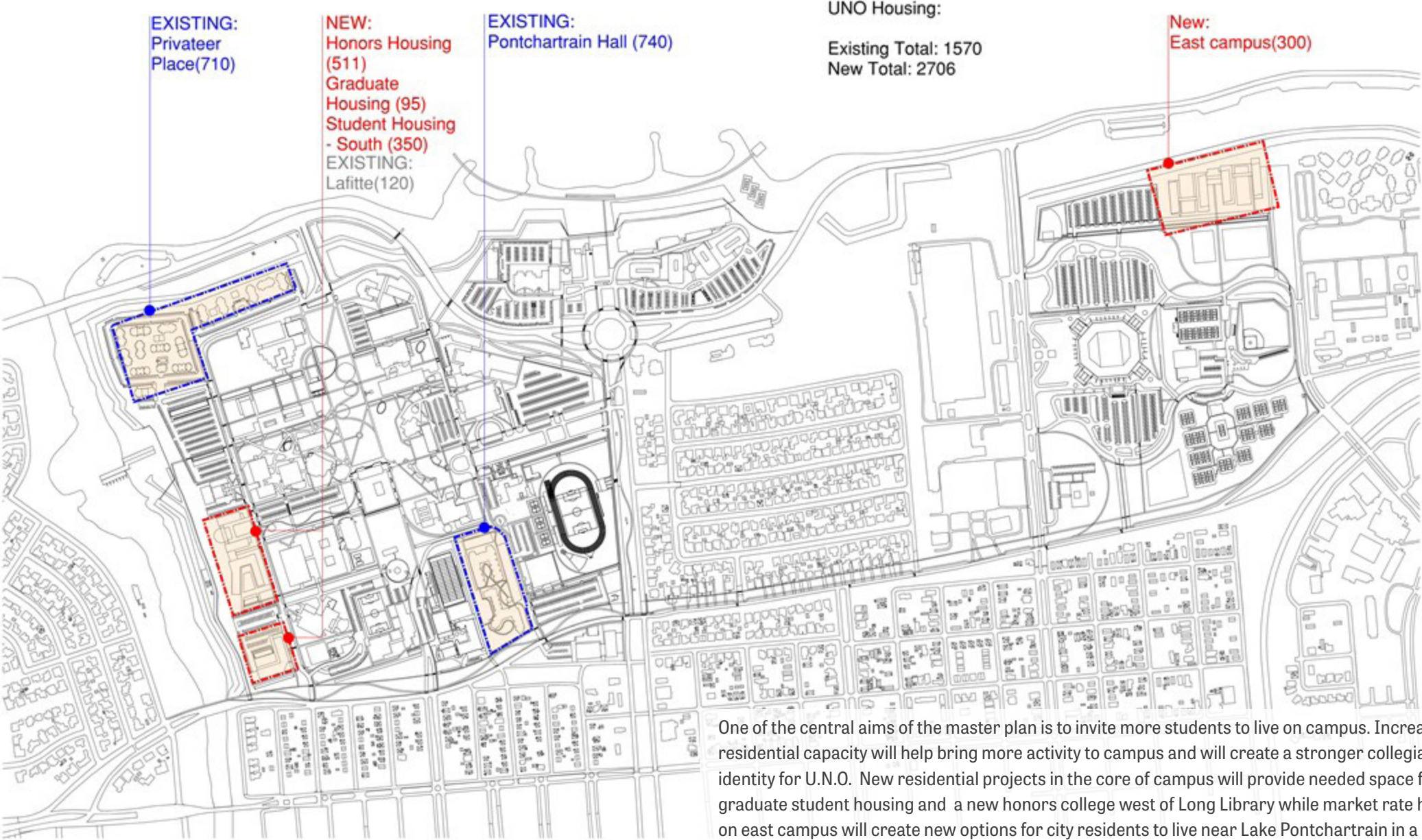
# Campus Buildings

## EXISTING + PROPOSED



This comprehensive diagram illustrates the full build-out of the campus and highlights the zoning of building typologies by color. The master plan propose reinforcing the core of the campus with academic building enhancements while continuing the tradition of locating student housing along the edges of core campus, but within easy access of the necessary academic and student life spaces. Partners are gathered in a new neighborhood on the south side of campus, limiting circulation conflicts with the University while creating synergies between similar academic programs.

# On-Campus Housing



One of the central aims of the master plan is to invite more students to live on campus. Increasing residential capacity will help bring more activity to campus and will create a stronger collegiate identity for U.N.O. New residential projects in the core of campus will provide needed space for new graduate student housing and a new honors college west of Long Library while market rate housing on east campus will create new options for city residents to live near Lake Pontchartrain in a park-like setting.

# Campus Landscapes

EXISTING

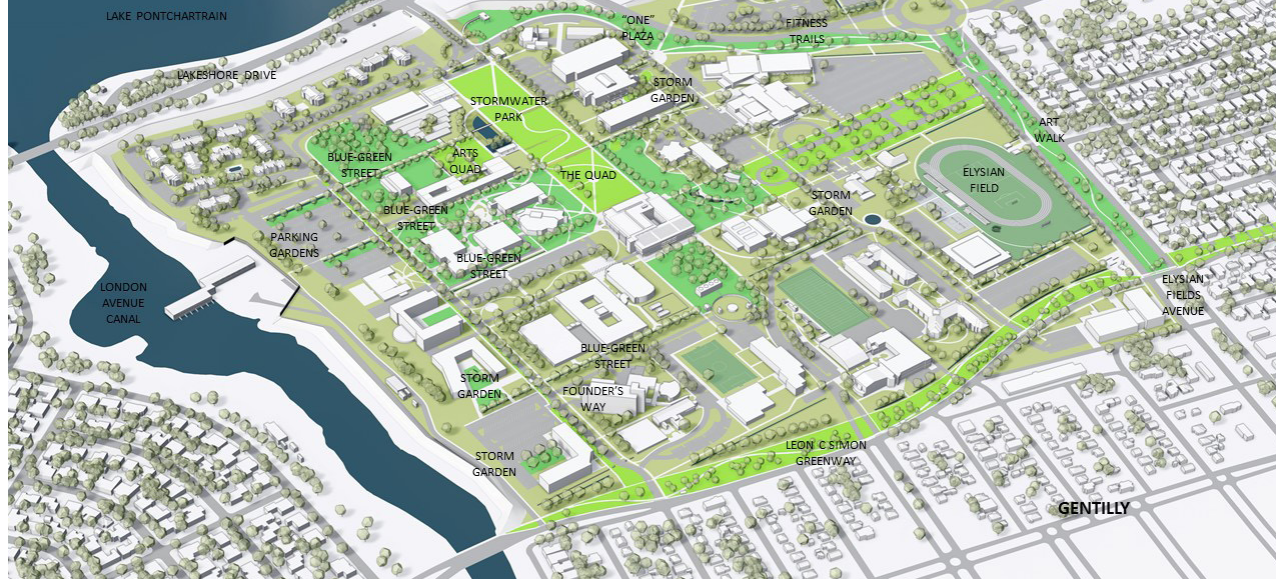


The existing campus is replete with outdoor spaces for gatherings, academic exploration, athletics and recreational uses. However, sparse plantings, inconsistent path networks and inaccessible walking routes limit the useability of many campus landscapes.

The current campus landscape is missing a coherence that helps stitch its various precincts and zones together.

# Campus Landscapes

PROPOSED



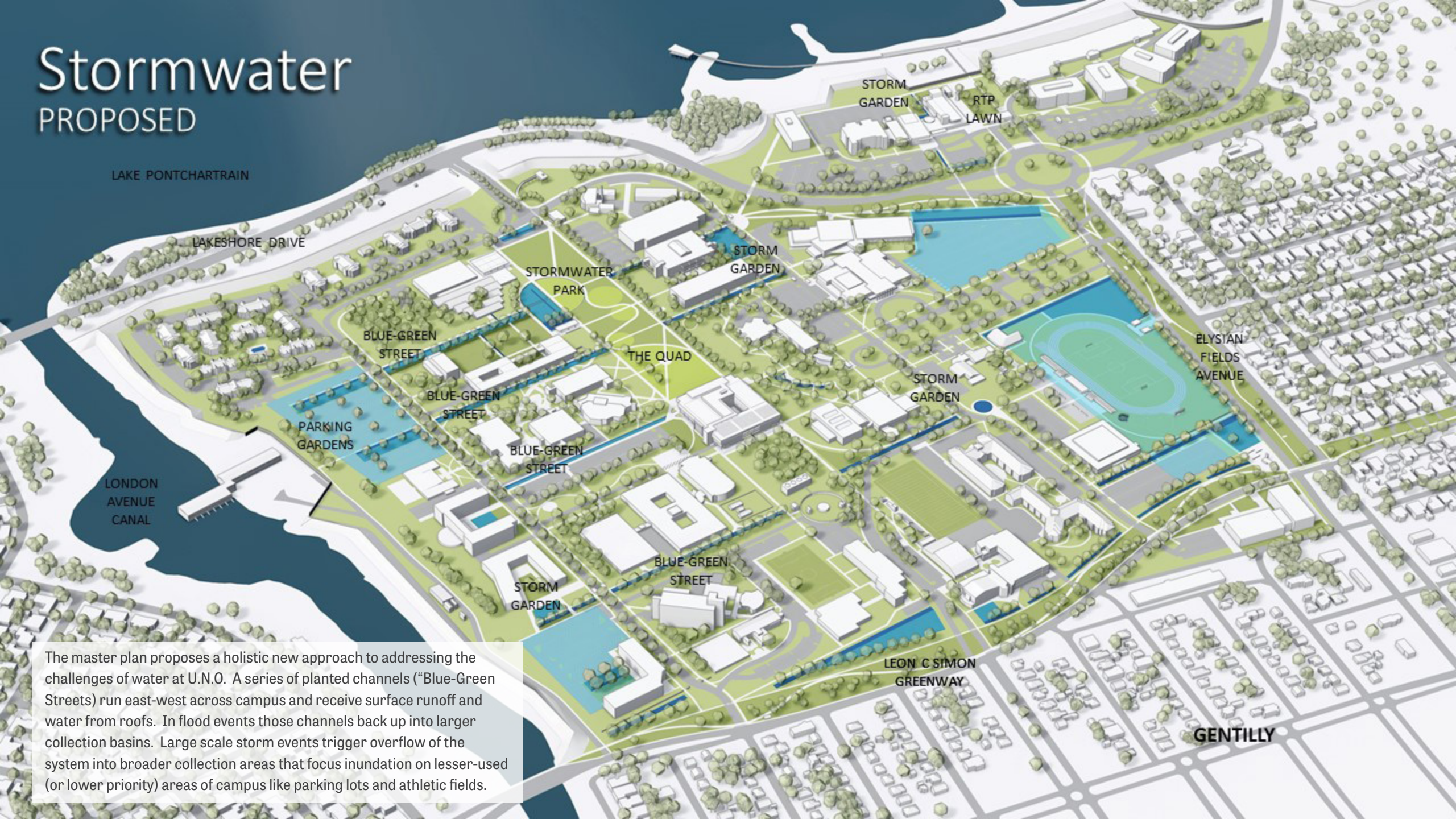
The proposed campus landscape plan builds upon the strong lines of the modernist campus plan while expanding the logic of quads, tree-lined walks and park spaces outwards from the center of campus.

- The main quad expands to include the area now used for parking to the north
- "The Meander", a major north-south walkway through the heart of campus re-connects the Gently neighborhood to the lakefront
- Tree lined "Blue-Green Streets" stretch east to west across campus and link new "parking gardens" to the interior of campus
- The perimeter of campus is treated as a continuous linear park, with the new Leon C Simon "Greenway" connecting core campus and east campus along a re-designed/re-aligned roadway.

(See Appendix G for plant Palette and proposed planting Matrix)



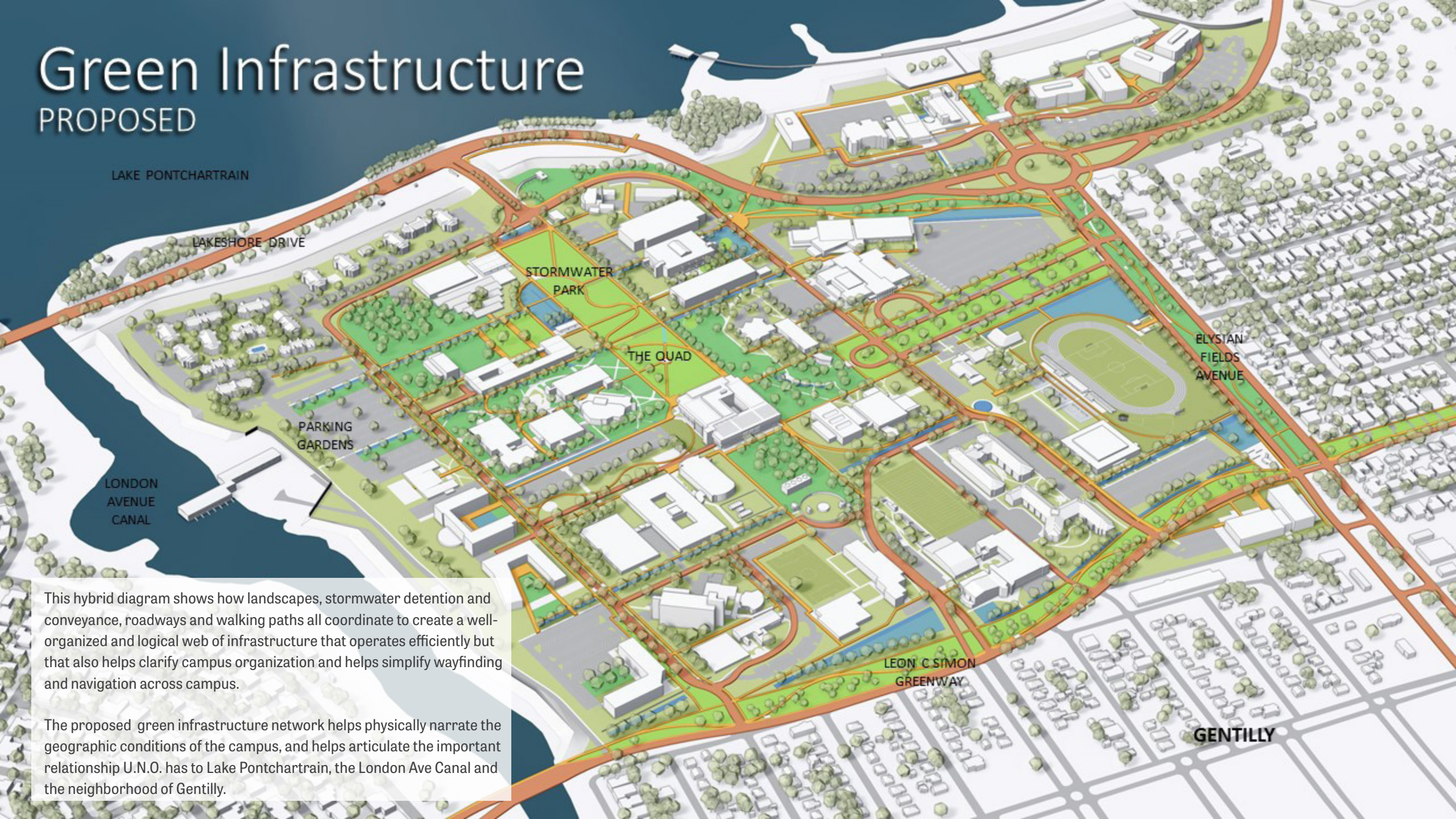
# Stormwater PROPOSED



The master plan proposes a holistic new approach to addressing the challenges of water at U.N.O. A series of planted channels ("Blue-Green Streets") run east-west across campus and receive surface runoff and water from roofs. In flood events those channels back up into larger collection basins. Large scale storm events trigger overflow of the system into broader collection areas that focus inundation on lesser-used (or lower priority) areas of campus like parking lots and athletic fields.

# Green Infrastructure

## PROPOSED

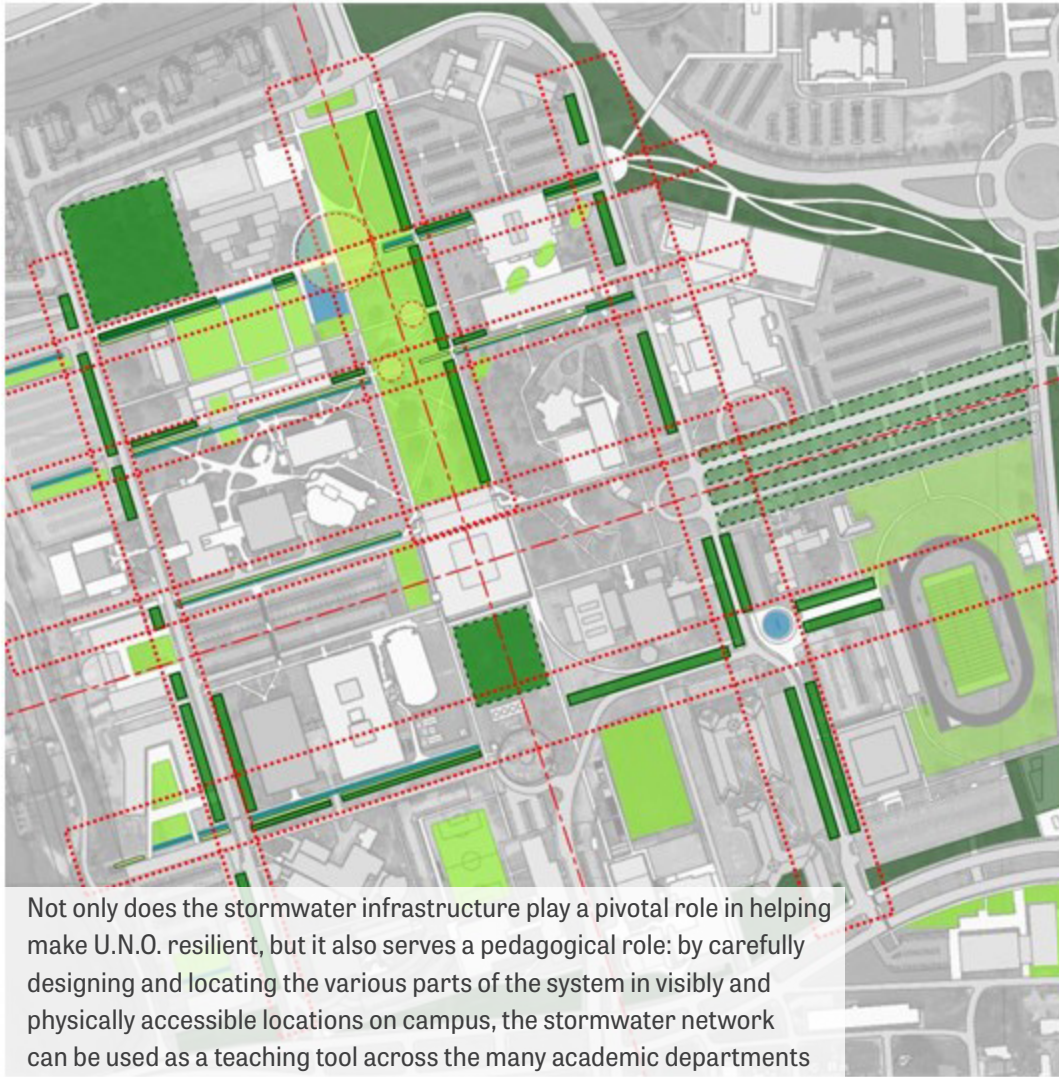


This hybrid diagram shows how landscapes, stormwater detention and conveyance, roadways and walking paths all coordinate to create a well-organized and logical web of infrastructure that operates efficiently but that also helps clarify campus organization and helps simplify wayfinding and navigation across campus.

The proposed green infrastructure network helps physically narrate the geographic conditions of the campus, and helps articulate the important relationship U.N.O. has to Lake Pontchartrain, the London Ave Canal and the neighborhood of Gentilly.

# Managing Water

## STORMWATER AS UNIFYING DESIGN ELEMENT and TEACHING TOOL



Not only does the stormwater infrastructure play a pivotal role in helping make U.N.O. resilient, but it also serves a pedagogical role: by carefully designing and locating the various parts of the system in visibly and physically accessible locations on campus, the stormwater network can be used as a teaching tool across the many academic departments at U.N.O. that might employ them for teaching and research projects. Additionally, even the casual visitor might serendipitously discover lessons about the important relationship New Orleans has with The Lake, The River and The Gulf.



STORMWATER CATCHMENT AREA DIAGRAM

# Landscape Infrastructure

This key locates the three campus-wide transects on the following pages. Each section depicts the important relationship between geographic conditions, the campus infrastructure and the University's building's and landscapes

SECTION 3  
page 32

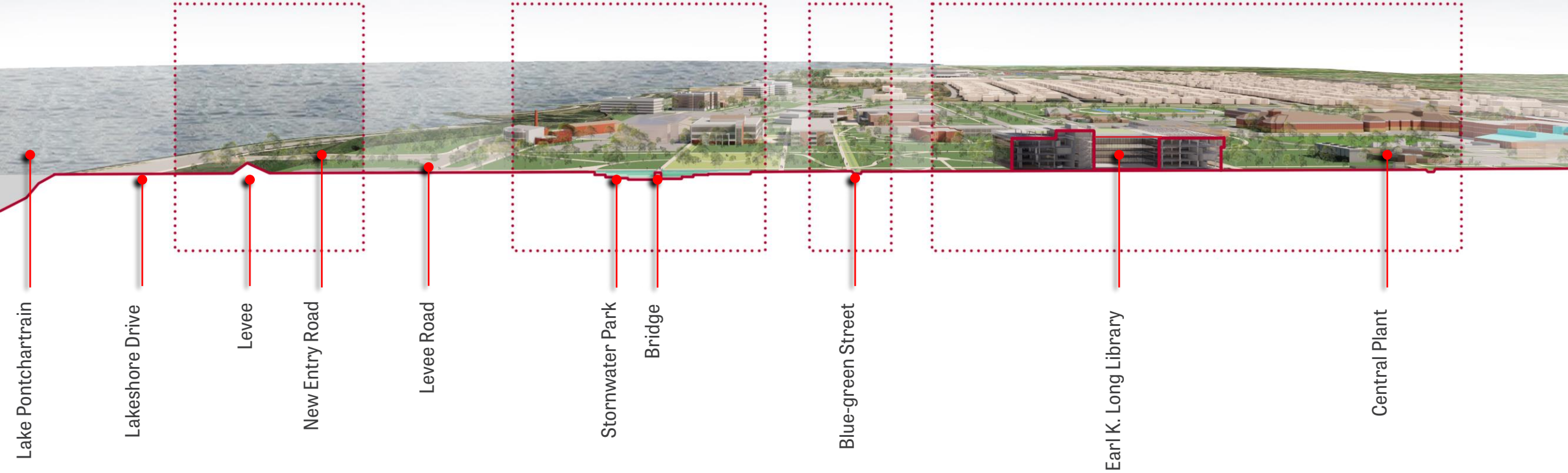
SECTION 2  
page 31

SECTION 1  
page 30

# Campus Section

## Section 1 - Lakeside to Library

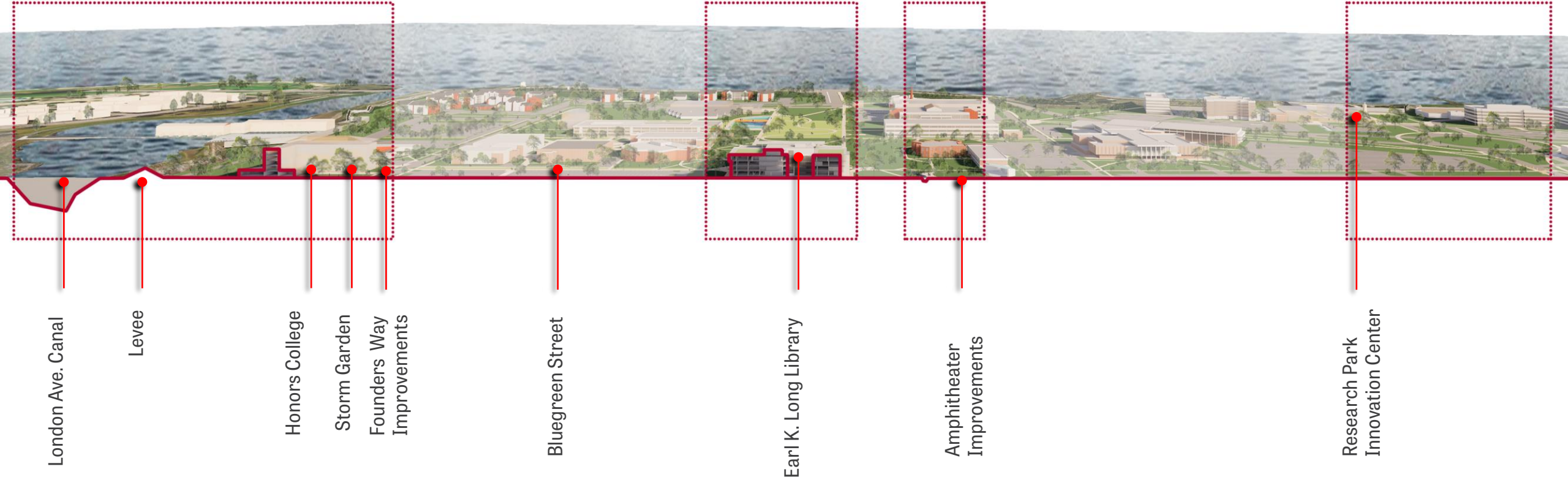
This section through campus reinforces the direct connection proposed between Earl K Long library and Lake Pontchartrain across the extended quad landscape (currently surface parking). A recurring theme in the master plan public engagement sessions was the importance of improving the link between the campus and surrounding neighborhoods and The Lake.



# Campus Section

## Section 2 - Canal to Elysian Fields Avenue

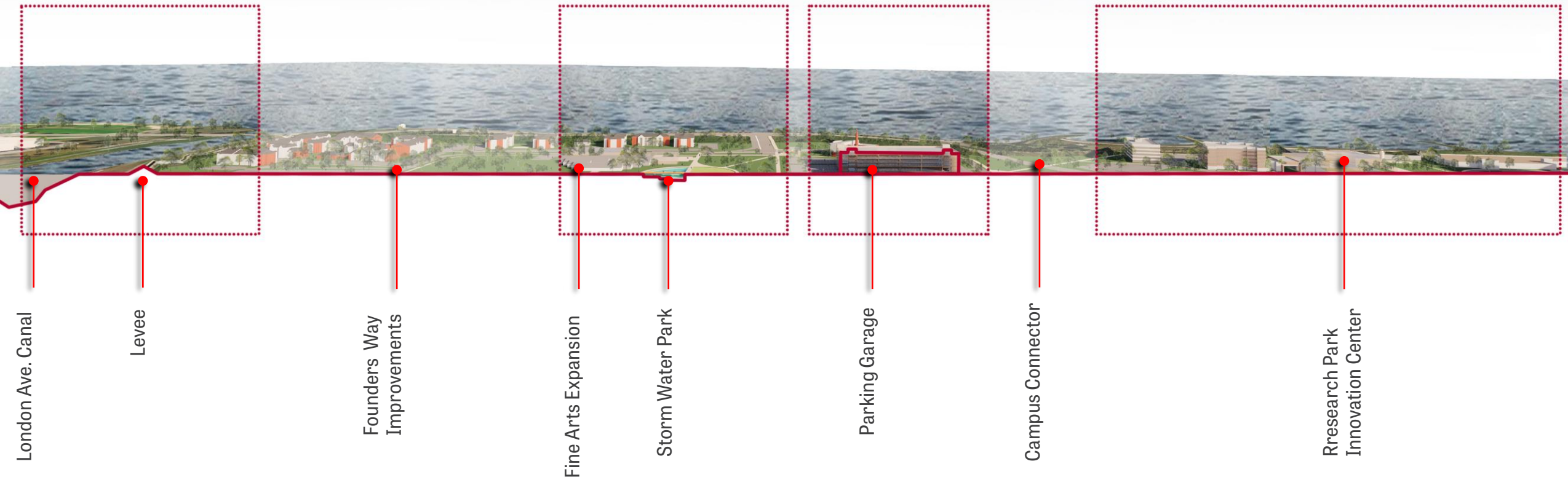
Section two shows a typical section along one of the plan's "Blue-Green streets". These east-west pedestrian corridors connect perimeter parking lots to the center of campus, and couple tree-lined walkways with major public paths to help connect people to the underlying landscape infrastructure of the campus.



# Campus Section

## Section 3 - Canal to Research and Tech Park

This section is cut through one of the key stretches of campus, just north of the Liberal Arts Building and south of Privateer Place. It highlights a number of the proposed building and landscape projects outlined in the masterplan and helps reinforce the importance of the connection across Lakeshore Drive to the Research and Tech Park.





Existing campus walkways are a mix of well-designed walk surfaces and aging paths in real need of upgrade. Frequent flooding makes a number of paths around campus inaccessible, and many walks would benefit from significant upgrades to make them more inviting to use and more pleasant to stop and linger on.

Currently there does not exist a safe and easily accessible route between core campus and the Research and Technology Park, making connections on foot between the two difficult and dangerous.



The proposed master plan walk network prioritizes the clear and organized movement of pedestrians across campus. It suggests improvements in type and number of walks, and recommends significant planting and stormwater enhancements to help anchor them to the logic of the campus plan.

A major north-south path - "The Meander" - creates a generous public promenade through the heart of campus that connects the Gentilly neighborhood to the lake. The undulating walk takes visitors along a path that reveals a number of new landscapes and buildings and culminates at the new Stormwater Park - a natural area that exemplifies the strong relationship U.N.O. has with water.

Multiple pedestrian connections between core campus and the Research and Tech Park are proposed and connect major campus destinations and improved parking options.



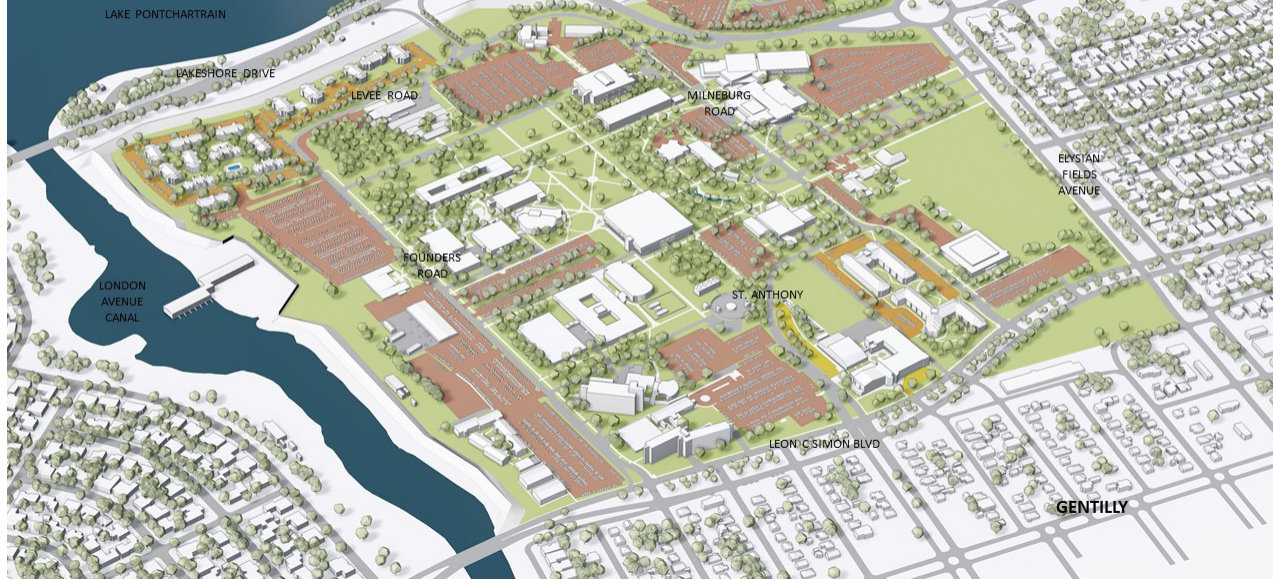
# Fitness Loops

## CONNECTING PRECINCTS



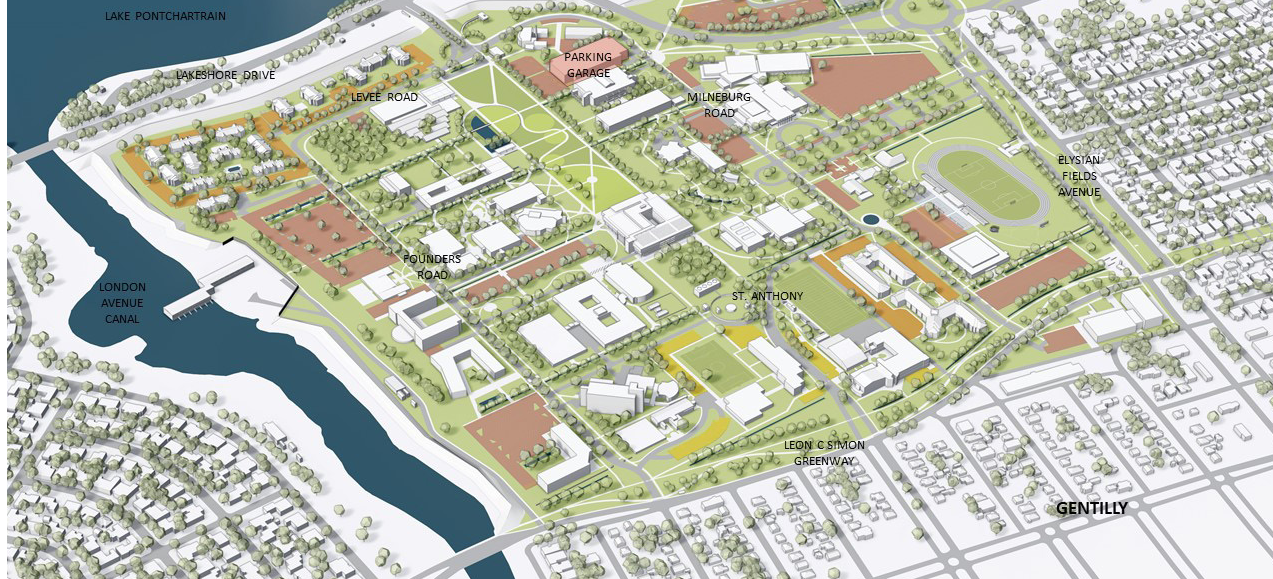
In the spirit of "One U.N.O.", the master plan recommends a series of larger-scale neighborhood path networks that help stitch the core campus to the east campus and the surrounding neighborhood. In addition to making the trip between campus more pleasurable, these paths provide a generous network of fitness routes for walking, running and biking. Walks will be well lit, signed and will be coordinated with bus stop locations and security booths.

## Campus Parking EXISTING



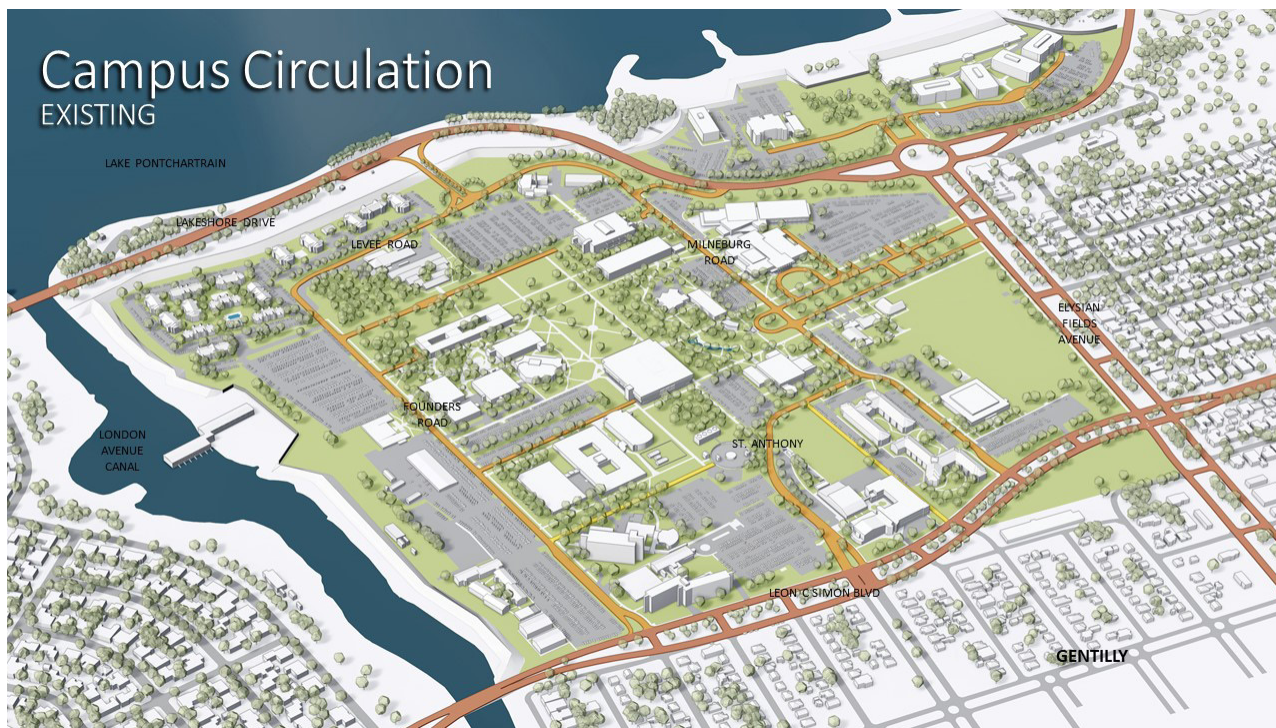
As with most every college and university campus, U.N.O. is responsible for providing the necessary parking accommodations for a vast number of students, faculty, staff and visitors. Because U.N.O. has traditionally been a commuter-heavy campus, the amount of surface parking on campus is extensive. The area covered by impervious paving helps exacerbate the problems associated with stormwater runoff and also contributes to the heat-island effect that drives up temperatures at ground level.

## Campus Parking PROPOSED



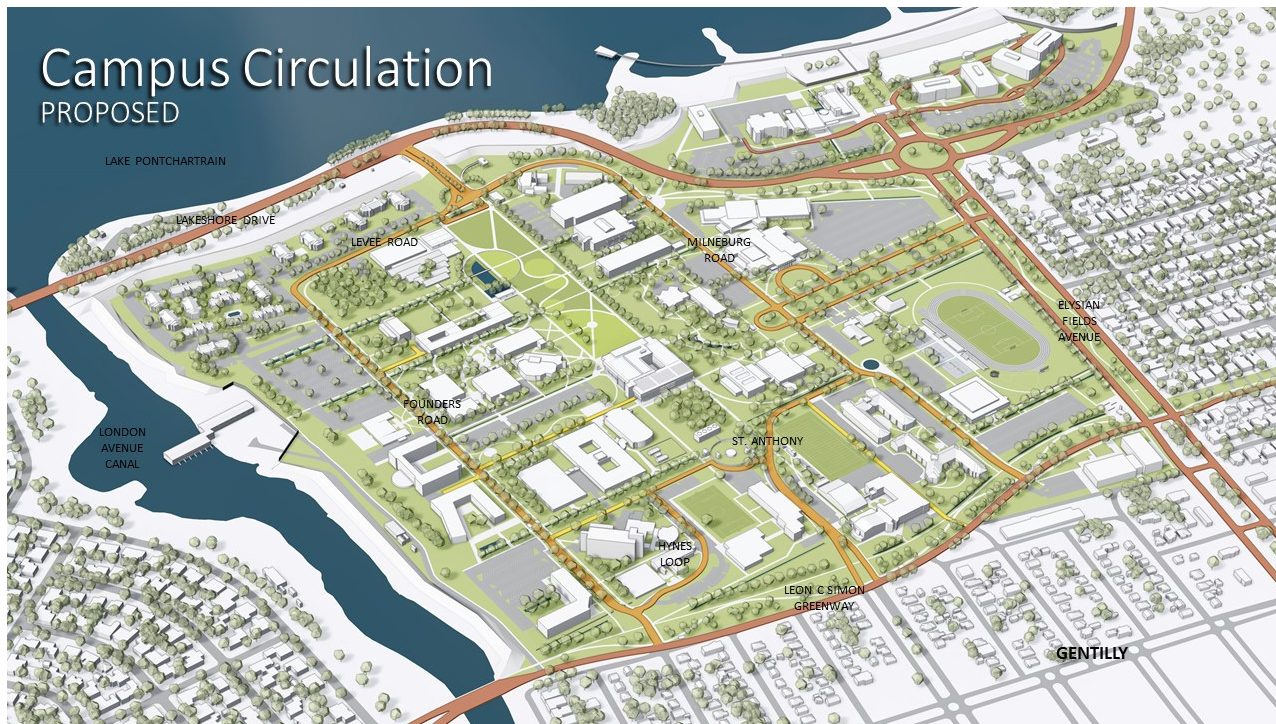
The master plan makes significant changes to the existing parking by both selectively removing areas in favor of new building sites and improved/expanded stormwater infrastructure and landscape spaces. In order to offset these reductions, a new 780+ car parking garage is situated between the two main vehicular campus entry points making it both easy to access for visitors and ideally suited to serve both core campus and the Research and Tech Park.

The master plan proposes providing 75% of the current parking count with the addition of the garage. The reduction suggests that in addition to removing surplus parking spaces, The University would also expect mass transit options to help bridge the gap in number of visitors and students relying on parking options on a typical day.



Existing vehicular circulation can be described as logical, but compromised by the number of entry and exit points around the perimeter of campus. The presence of Ben Franklin High School along the campus' south edge complicates the establishment of recognizable portals into campus.

The Leon C Simon corridor along the southern edge of campus is oversized for the traffic load it handles. The planted median serves to further separate the university from the Gentilly neighborhood and creates a number of unnecessary vehicular intersections along the length of campus.



The master plan proposes making the campus entries off of Elysian Fields Ave and lakeside drive the only two public entries into campus. A reconfigured Lakeshore Drive entry/exit would permit vehicular movements going in both easterly and westerly directions.

A new drive associated with the future Hynes Charter School project would link-up with the existing St Anthony drive and the Ben Franklin exit loop to form a network of streets dedicated to traffic related to those two institutions. Other roads will permit exiting only.

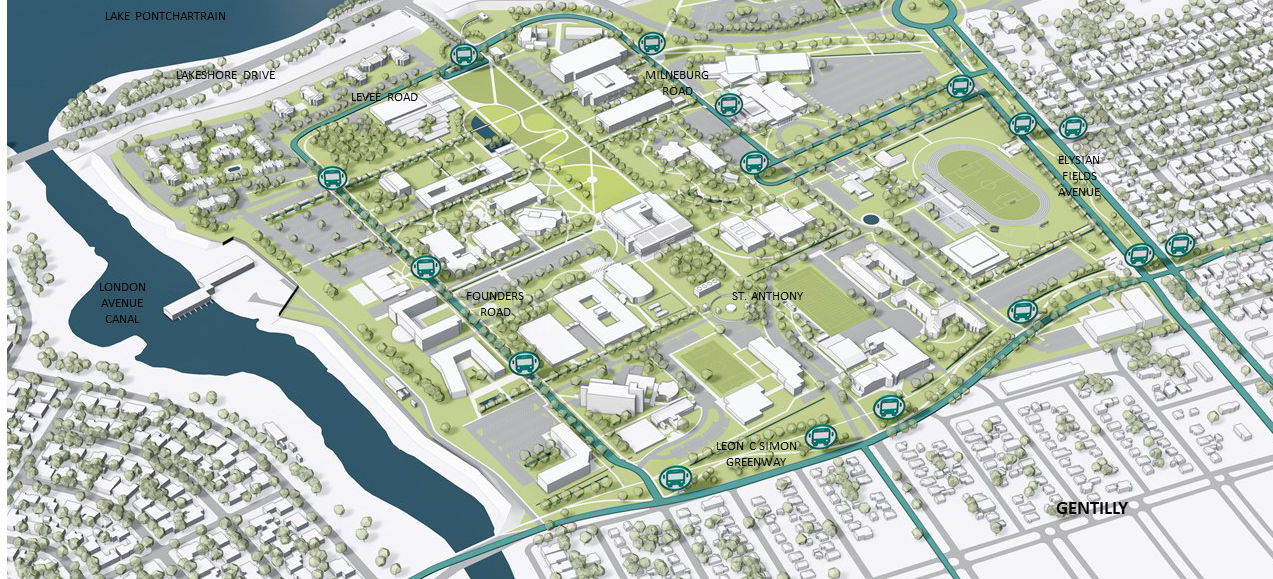
The separated, two way Leon C Simon Blvd is made a single roadway, freeing-up valuable real estate for a greenway that connects core campus to east campus and provides a new linear park space for U.N.O. and the surrounding community.

## Bus Routes EXISTING



Bus service to the university has been a contentious issue. New Orleans RTA provides service to The University on a number of lines, but demand for bus service has been inconsistent. For students living on campus, the buses are a much-needed lifeline to retail and other services off-campus, but the bus schedule does not lend itself to regular, reliable use.

## Bus Routes PROPOSED



With the addition of new housing options on campus and the resultant decrease in surface parking provided, the master plan recommends supplementing the frequency and reach of connecting bus routes to and from campus.

The master plan introduces the idea of pulling at least one of the RTA routes into the core of the campus to make it a more accessible option to those living, working and studying on campus. The plan also locates covered bus stops along the new route and positions them near hubs of campus activity and new student residences.

Lastly, to bolster connectivity to east campus, the master plan recommends establishing a shuttle route between it and core campus to improve the ability to move between the two sides of campus.

# Parking

## EXISTING + PROPOSED

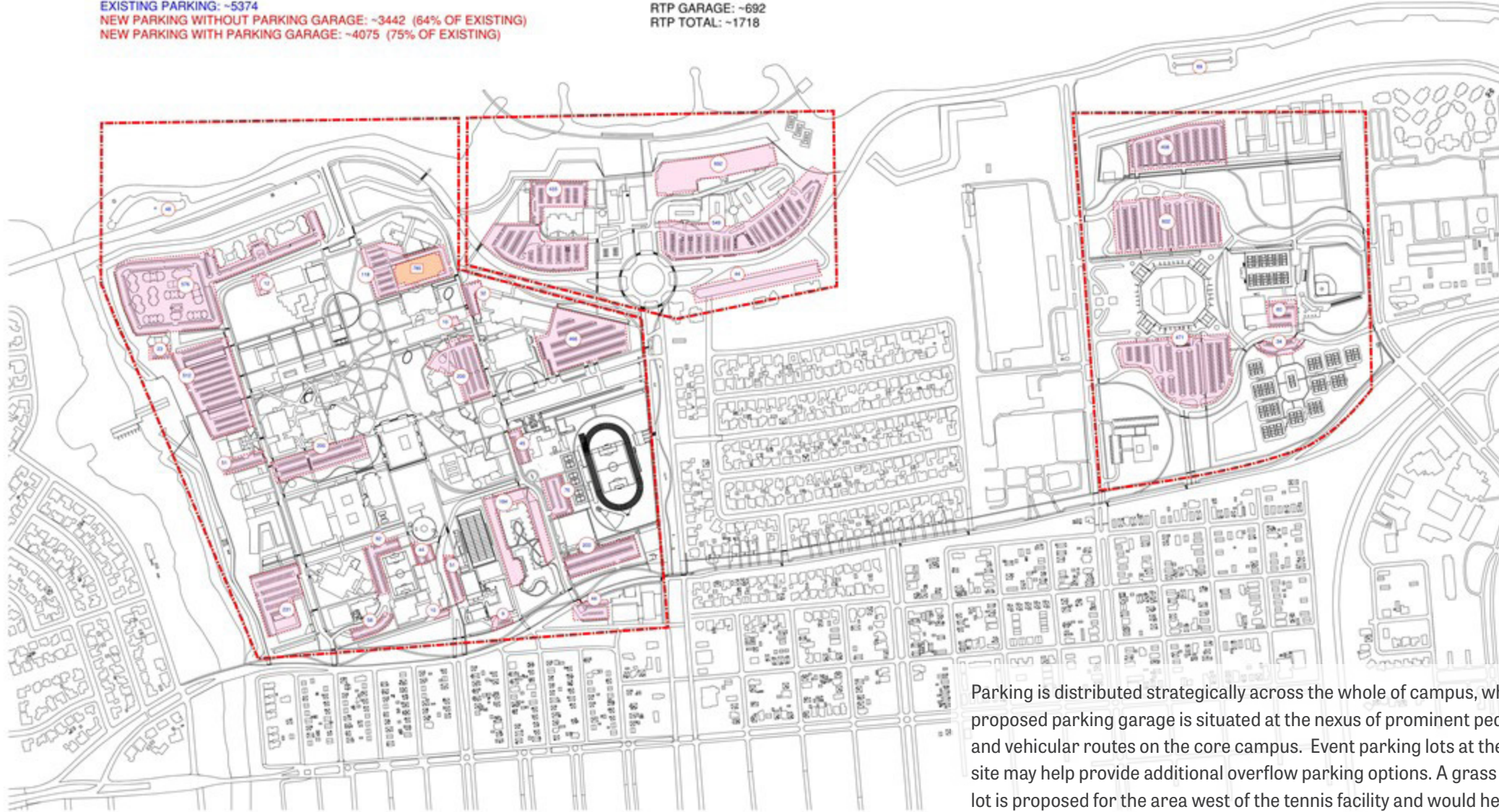
### MAIN CAMPUS:

EXISTING PARKING: ~5374  
NEW PARKING WITHOUT PARKING GARAGE: ~3442 (64% OF EXISTING)  
NEW PARKING WITH PARKING GARAGE: ~4075 (75% OF EXISTING)

### RESEARCH & TECH PARK:

RTP GARAGE: ~692  
RTP TOTAL: ~1718

### EAST CAMPUS PARKING TOTAL: ~1644



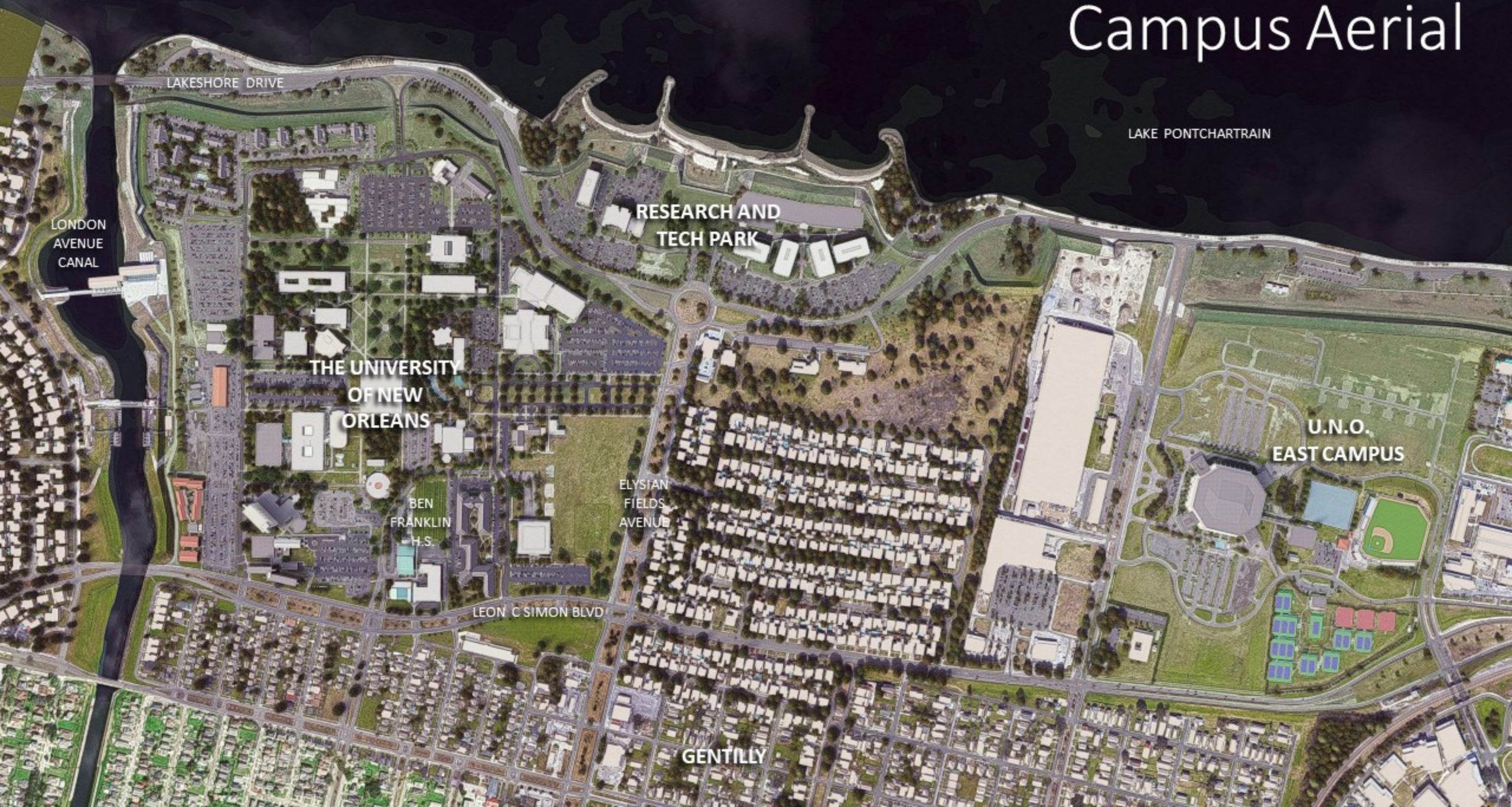
Parking is distributed strategically across the whole of campus, while the proposed parking garage is situated at the nexus of prominent pedestrian and vehicular routes on the core campus. Event parking lots at the arena site may help provide additional overflow parking options. A grass paved lot is proposed for the area west of the tennis facility and would help accommodate parking needs for large arena events.

# AERIAL VIEWS

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The following section presents rendered views of the U.N.O. campus - both as it exists today and as it might exist in the future. This “before - and - after” approach to presenting the master plan attempts to illustrate the results of our collaborative design process. It endeavors to capture in three dimensions many months of dialog between the design team, the U.N.O. community (students, faculty, staff and administrators) and a group of incredibly committed community members that volunteered their time and their passion for U.N.O. and The City of New Orleans.

# Campus Aerial



# Challenges + Opportunities



## OPPORTUNITIES

- School on a lake
- Diverse partners (RTP, BFHS, Hynes)
- Room to grow - buildings and landscapes

## CHALLENGES:

- Three separate precincts (core, RTP and east)
- Surrounded by surface parking
- BFHS in prominent position, confusing entry and identity



# The "One U.N.O." Plan

BRINGING PEOPLE AND PROGRAMS TOGETHER



This aerial image represents the realization of the full master plan agenda. Buildings in orange are new and/or improved facilities.

# The "One U.N.O." Plan



This view captures U.N.O. as it exists in 2021, with Lake Pontchartrain to the north (top) and Gentilly to the south. London Avenue Canal serves as the physical western edge of campus. Elysian Fields Fvenue stretches from the center of U.N.O. southward into the heart of Marigny on the banks of the Mississippi River.

# The "One U.N.O." Plan



This view portrays the proposed master plan scope, with necessary buildings, landscapes and infrastructure to unite the three precincts of campus and create a single, thriving campus environment ready for the next century.

# The "One U.N.O." Plan

## THE LEON C SIMON GREENWAY



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NEW ORLEANS

RESEARCH AND  
TECH PARK

U.N.O. EAST  
CAMPUS

LEON C SIMON  
GREENWAY

The major civic/urban design initiative at the center of the master plan is the Leon C Simon Greenway. It capitalizes on the over-designed roadways and median of the existing boulevard by compressing the separate lanes into a single one, and then transforming the remainder of the right of way into a public-facing park with tree-lined biking and walking paths.

# The "One U.N.O." Plan



For the purposes of the masterplan document, the design is presented as two halves of a larger whole: Core Campus (including the Research and Tech Park) and East Campus.



VIEW OF CORE CAMPUS FROM SOUTHWEST





**VIEW OF U.N.O. FROM WEST.**

The western edge of campus is redeveloped as a major center for student housing and student life. Residence halls are set amidst new, pervious surface parking lots that are liberally planted with native shade trees. Stormwater is handled locally at gardens associated with each new building, while also tying into the campus stormwater infrastructure.

The Founders Road corridor is renovated to become a pedestrian and bike friendly passageway that also supports expanded mass transit options - all while helping connect students to the buildings and landscapes in the academic core.



VIEW OF CORE CAMPUS FROM NORTHEAST







VIEW OF RESEARCH AND TECH PARK FROM NORTH - EXISTING CONDITIONS



**VIEW OF RESEARCH AND TECH PARK FROM NORTH - PROPOSED CONDITIONS**

Long closed to the public, The Beach at U.N.O. is reopened to visitors and becomes a destination for residents of New Orleans, a major attraction for tenants at the Research and Tech Park and a boon for students at U.N.O. A boardwalk skirts the fringes of the beach and is anchored by a covered event pavilion and a public boat launch.

The Research and Tech Park expands to include a new innovation center and future hotel facility, accompanied by enhanced outdoor spaces and parking.



VIEW OF CORE CAMPUS FROM NORTHWEST





VIEW OF CORE CAMPUS FROM NORTH





**VIEW OF THE MAIN QUAD FROM THE NORTH**

The expanded quad connects the Earl K. Long Library to The Lake along a series of tree-lined campus walkways. The new public promenade of “The Meander” winds its way through the landscape, connecting outdoor spaces and path networks, and culminating in The Stormwater Park. Expanded visitor amenities anchor the north end of the quad, creating a welcoming new arrival experience for those entering campus from Lakeshore Drive.



VIEW OF CORE CAMPUS FROM EAST - EXISTING CONDITIONS

## VIEW OF CORE CAMPUS FROM EAST

The campus edge along Elysian Fields Avenue is designed to convey the stature of an institution of higher learning, with trees, piers and walks demarking the threshold between public space and university. A winding walk down the Elysian median hosts sculpture and art installations and ties into the campus-wide path network. A new mixed-use development is planned for the parcel of University owned land across Leon C Simon Blvd, and will offer much-needed retail and service platforms for student and community use.





LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN

LAKESHORE DRIVE

LAKEFRONT  
ARENA

UTILITIES

MAESTRI  
FIELD

PRESS  
DRIVE

TENNIS  
FACILITY

PARKING

LEON C SIMON BLVD

FRANKLIN  
AVENUE

NET CHARTER  
HIGH SCHOOL

VIEW OF EAST CAMPUS - EXISTING CONDITIONS





**VIEW OF EAST CAMPUS**

East campus remains the center of athletic activity on campus, but is made more welcoming with the implementation of an "urban forest" - a planting strategy that artfully introduces a range of native trees and shrubs to an otherwise barren property. A new vehicular entry off of Leon C Simon Blvd relieves pressure on the new event plaza to the west of the arena, allowing it to serve a more ceremonial role as the place students come together before big events. Housing, parks and paths expand the utility of East Campus and give it new life. Its proximity to the lake and its enhanced facilities draw visitors from across the region.



VIEW OF CORE CAMPUS FROM NORTH



# PERSPECTIVE VIEWS

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## VIEW OF "BLUE-GREEN STREET"

The master plan calls for introducing a series of parallel campus walks that stretch across campus from west to east. These "blue-green streets" both serve to link different parts of campus but also help connect people to place - walks are aligned with new stormwater canals that store and convey water. They are planted with native wetland plants that help stabilize the banks of the canal, clean stormwater runoff and create habitat for indigenous species.



## STORMWATER PARK

The centerpiece of the masterplan design, the Stormwater Park is located at the intersection of the expanded Main Quad and the improved Arts Quad to the west. It is simultaneously a garden, a learning laboratory and an engineered landscape for handling stormwater.

Paths, terraces and a footbridge all converge to shape a series of spaces that put students, faculty and visitors in direct contact with the natural systems on site. A covered outdoor classroom extends U.N.O.'s ability to teach beyond the walls of its academic buildings and provides a space for hands-on learning and a space to collaborate.





THE QUAD

ARTS QUAD

OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

CYPRESS GARDEN

BLUE-GREEN STREET

MEMORIAL TREES

MEADOW 2

SPILLWAY

"THE MEANDER"

RILL

BRIDGE

STORMWATER BENCHES

LAWN

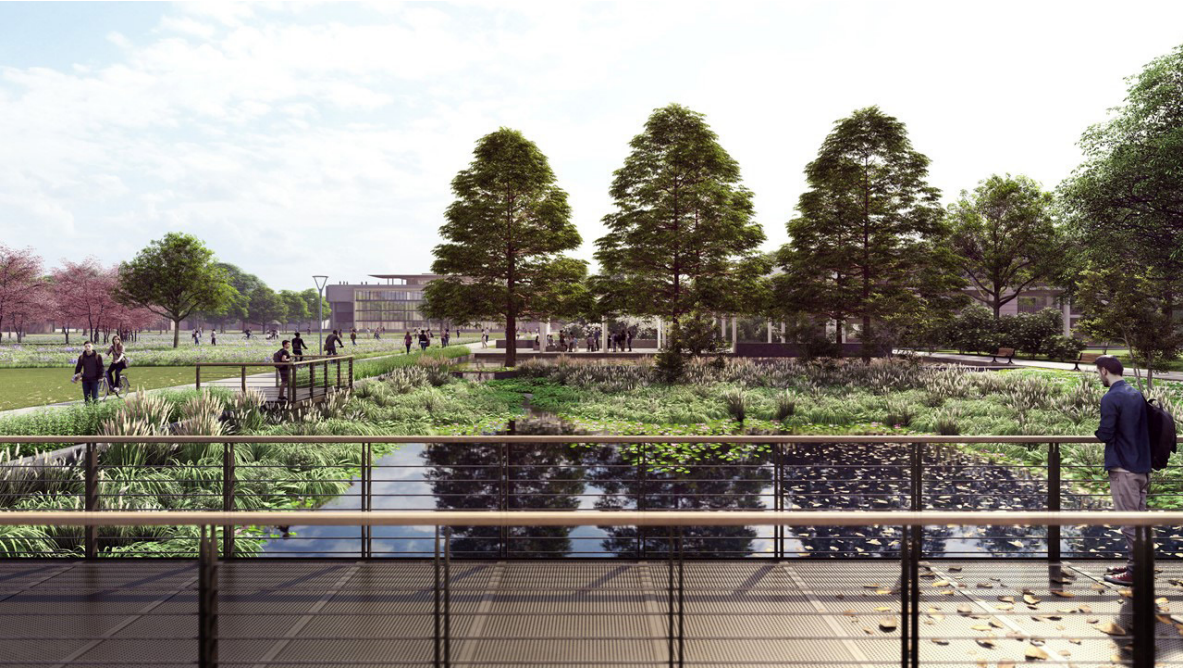
OVERLOOK

SITE WALL

MEADOW 1

# STORMWATER PARK

The footbridge allows the stormwater basin to extend below the axis of the major blue-green street and gives pedestrians a place to pause and look into the water below. As rainfall ebbs and flows through the season, the level of the water in the basin rises and recedes.



## STORMWATER PARK

The main campus walk and "The Meander" meet along the eastern side of the new park, where elevated viewing platforms allow visitors to interact directly with the plantings and infrastructure of the park. The Cypress Garden and covered classroom can be seen in the background.





## OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

The pavilion-like quality of the classroom allows for gatherings that both feel as though they are open-air but also shielded from the elements. The upper surface of the pavilion structure provides shade and a much-needed layer of protection from rainfall.



## "THE MEANDER"

The winding public promenade through campus strikes a dynamic line against the rigid, orthogonal structure of the campus circulation network. Here, The Meander gracefully separates areas of manicured lawn from more natural wildflower meadows. A low site wall provides a place to sit along the arcing path adjacent to the Stormwater Park.



## "THE MEANDER"

A circle of flowering trees helps demark an intimate open garden space carved out within the larger quad. In such a vast landscape, these smaller, inward-facing moments create flexible spaces for a range of events, from sitting quietly with friends to smaller-scale academic gatherings and pop-up performances.



## A NEW CAMPUS CENTERPIECE

At the southern edge of the expanded quad lies the renovated and expanded Earl K. Long Library and Learning Commons. The heart of academic life on campus, the library continues to be the most popular and well-used building at U.N.O. Continued focus on it, and its connection to the lake and other important campus landmarks is a key facet of the "One U.N.O." master plan.



**4**

**PROJECT  
PRIORITIES**

---

# FRAMEWORK

Landscape

Infrastructure

# FACILITIES

Architecture

Space Planning

# P-P-P

Programs

Partnerships

Policies

## LANDSCAPE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. **Pedestrian Connections to Research and Technology Park and associated landscape improvements** – fulfills promise of “One U.N.O.” plan to strengthen connections between Research and Tech Park and the U.N.O. campus.

2. **Blue-green street infrastructure and Founder’s Way upgrades** – addresses the need to create a more accessible and welcoming campus experience for students and visitors as they navigate campus.

3. **Parking Gardens, treed parking aisles and stormwater trays** (+ transit improvements) – reduces impervious paving, emphasizes alternate transit options and supports better water management practices, all while making campus a greener place

4. **Main Quad Extension and Stormwater Park** – a signature landscape improvement that reinforces the distinct identity and spirit of the university. A covered outdoor classroom, stormwater laboratory and “The Meander” – a grand public promenade through campus frame a collection of native Louisiana landscape typologies.

5. **Leon C Simon Greenway** – a transformative urban strategy to create a direct link between core campus and east campus and to improve walking and biking routes within the larger context of Gentilly. Includes bikeway, walking paths, plantings and urban plazas/campus entry points and signage

6. **U.N.O. Beachfront and Boardwalk** – a once in a generation opportunity to restore the legacy of the lakefront while articulating the challenged history of the historic landmark. A floating/elevated boardwalk is anchored at its ends by a public access boat dock and a covered event pavilion.

### Tier Two Landscape and Infrastructure Priorities

- Reconfigured Lakeshore Drive entry (new traffic pattern)
- Shared athletics/rec track and field at Elysian Fields
- Urban Forest and fitness trails at East Campus
- Elysian Fields Art Walk
- Small scale pocket parks and outdoor study spaces
- Levee Park and Pavilion

Refer to Appendix H for full list

# FRAMEWORK

Landscape

Infrastructure

# FACILITIES

Architecture

Space Planning

# P-P-P

Programs

Partnerships

Policies

## ARCHITECTURE AND SPACE PLANNING

### 1. Amphitheater improvements.

2. **Infrastructure** - replace main switch gears across the entire campus.

3. **Replace Roofs** - for Bicentennial Education, Engineering Annex, Fine Arts, Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism.

4. **Mechanical System Upgrades** - replace 3rd floor AHU (Rm 332) controls and balancing & assess fume hoods in the Chemical Science Annex. Also, replace CPVC piping throughout and install new boilers for Pontchartrain Halls.

5. **Fire alarm upgrades** - up grade fire alarm system across the entire campus.

6. **Library and Learning Commons** - continue to consolidate core academic and student life services in the center of campus. Make library one-stop-shop for both residential and commuter students.

7. **Parking Garage** - permits the conversion of existing surface lots into available building sites

### Tier Two Architecture Priorities

- Academic Space improvements:
  - Liberal Arts renovation/expansion
  - Arts Convergence renovation/expansion
  - Performing Arts renovation/expansion
  
- Athletics facilities upgrades (baseball, tennis, aquatics etc)

Refer to Appendix H for full list

## FRAMEWORK

Landscape

Infrastructure

## FACILITIES

Architecture

Space Planning

## P-P-P

Programs

Partnerships

Policies

### PROGRAMS, PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICIES

1. **Honors Housing and Academic Center** - elevates residential experience and academic success programming for a new generation of exceptional students.
2. **Mixed-use Building** - brings retail and housing options to campus; creates much needed amenities that will benefit both campus and the surrounding community.
3. **Undergraduate, Graduate Student and Family Housing** – improves ability to house more students on campus in facilities that are on par or exceed offerings at peer institutions.
4. **Innovation Center (and site improvements)** – collaborative space that draws a variety of partners to campus while exposing U.N.O. students to the most advanced learning/teaching/R+D spaces in New Orleans.
5. **Market rate housing** (athletes housing) on east campus.

Refer to Appendix H for full list



# Sustainability at UNO

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The master plan has touched on the many ways in which sustainability is central to the future of U.N.O. Water conservation and the careful management of the conveyance and storage of stormwater is an obvious component of any plan to secure a sustainable future for the University. Coastal resilience, and actively building landscapes and facilities that are hardened against sea level rise and the impacts of storm surges on New Orleans from the Gulf and Lake Pontchartrain must be incorporated into any lasting work on campus. But other, less visible but equally important measures must be taken to secure a balanced relationship with the planet and establish a reasonable level of expectations for what can be achieved in the name of a healthy, symbiotic relationship with the natural world.

The realities of working at the scale of the current master plan suggests that sustainability must be pursued in manageable pieces. Achieving the changes necessary to strike the right balance with the natural world and make a lasting change in the way we interact with the environment won't likely happen overnight. It would take vast sums of money and buy-in from broad swaths of the public sector in New Orleans to accomplish what is illustrated in these pages. But by starting small, and by establishing a list of priorities for even the smallest of planned improvements, U.N.O. can play an active role in slowing and, ultimately reversing, some of the alarming trends we've seen in the global climate over the last quarter century.

## THE FIVE PRIORITIES

- **Landscape improvements:** look at every intervention as a way to 1) increase stormwater retention, cleansing and storage; 2) decrease irrigation requirements; 3) increase native and biodiverse habitat; 4) reduce paved area and increase shade
- **Energy performance standards:** develop a master plan for building upgrades that increases the efficiency and moves toward electrification. For major renovations and new construction, align campus building standards with green building programs, such as LEED, and set minimum performance criteria. Explore ESCOs and other cost-neutral programs as a way to implement improved efficiency sooner rather than later, and explore PPA arrangements for rooftop solar.
- **Water performance standards:** target HVAC, fixture and central plant improvements to reduce potable water demand, and increase use of non-potable water. Set minimum performance criteria for major renovations and new construction around water use.
- **Biophilia and connecting to nature:** create spaces of refuge within the campus landscape. Integrate biophilic concepts into new construction and renovation projects.
- **Circulation and mobility:** Develop the campus in ways that promote walking/biking/use of public transportation and reduce the use of single occupancy vehicles.

Refer to Appendix J for full assessment

# APPENDIX

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**APPENDIX A : General Assessment**

**APPENDIX B : Engagement Document**

**APPENDIX C : Campus Life Amenities Assessment**

**APPENDIX D : Campus Life Engagement**

**APPENDIX E : Comprehensive Water (Ecology / Resilience)  
Assessment**

**APPENDIX F : Space Utilization Report**

**APPENDIX G: Landscape Assessment**

**APPENDIX H: Deferred Maintenance Document**

**APPENDIX J: Sustainability Assessment**