

CAPSTONE REPORT

URBAN DESIGN

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School of Urban Studies
June 2026



Group photo during site visits. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

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STUDENTS' VISION FOR THE UWT CAMPUS

URBAN DESIGN CAPSTONE

Introduction

Proceeding the release of the UW Tacoma masterplan from Bjarke Ingles Group (BIG) in Spring of 2025, the senior urban design cohort of the following school year (2025-2026) worked to critique the proposed framework and design solutions that were not already addressed. The Urban Design cohort partnered with a group of Civil Engineering students in an interdisciplinary process to flesh out proposals.

Masterplan Background

BIG and UW Tacoma released their 30 year masterplan where the framework showcased the expansion of the UW Tacoma's campus an addition 2-3 blocks West, activating the campus and aiming to transition away from being a commuter campus. The BIG masterplan holds a large focus on creating a people-centered environment, along with a large focal point on the creation of a viewshed of Mt. Rainier that shapes the entirety of the campus. With the expansion of the campus, the BIG framework aims to achieve the campus as an active core in the center of Downtown Tacoma with two front doors, connecting to the community throughout the city.

Project Brief

For the 2026 Urban Design capstone project, we were assigned the reimagination of what the future holds of UW Tacoma. Our first quarter on the project, Autumn 2025, was spent analyzing and heavily critiquing the BIG masterplan, where we took away major focal points to proceed with into our design process. In the next quarter, Winter 2026, our group planned and conducted a Community Engagement campaign around student commuting patterns, in hope to gain a better understanding on the needs of students for parking. Our final quarter on the project, Spring 2026, was spent on a collaboration project with the 2026 Senior Civil Engineering cohort to redesign both 19th street and Jefferson Ave with more technical focus, before finally wrapping up the process with individual designs to reimagine different areas on campus.



UW Tacoma aerial view. Photo courtesy of University of Washington Tacoma.

Who are we

Our senior Urban Design and Civil Engineering Cohorts were led by Dr. Bára Šafářová and Dr. Nara Almeida, made up of 7 Urban Design students and 6 Civil Engineering students. Our group work between the two disciplines began in Winter of 2025, taking on two projects in the UW Tacoma campus reimagination: ADA access along 19th street and GSI implementation on Jefferson Ave.

Making up two groups, we thoughtfully proposed ideas that incorporated space, form, and experience, bringing design ideas to meet technical knowledge to further make our design proposals a reality.

Our teams worked in a compressed timeline that demanded for consistent feedback and collaboration sessions between our peers and professionals. Our steady exchanges between disciplines and in experience founded our work processes.



19th Street group receiving feedback from Brian Wang. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.



Collaboration session to draft SET showcase poster. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.



Dr. Nara
Almeida
-Instructor-



Dr. Bára
Šafářová
-Instructor-



Hunter
Antanavague
-Civil Engineering-



Laurence
Applen
-Urban Design-



Isaiah
Beidalah
-Civil Engineering-



Benjamin
Butler
-Civil Engineering-



Nam
Cao
-Urban Design-



Sam
Eilert
-Urban Design-



Luke
Keser
-Urban Design-



Zachariah
Manalese
-Urban Design-



Ariana
Orozco Perez
-Urban Design-



Bryden
Punsalan
-Urban Design-



Dennis
Quiocho
-Civil Engineering-



Justin
Ray
-Civil Engineering-



Luci
Tolic
-Civil Engineering-

COLLABORATION WITH CIVIL ENGINEERS

Student Groups

19th Street

Ariana Orozco Perez Urban Designer	Benjamin Butler Civil Engineer
Bryden Punsalen Urban Designer	Dennis Quiocho Civil Engineer
Laurence Applin Urban Designer	Isaiah Beidalah Civil Engineer
Zachariah Manalese Urban Designer	

Jefferson Street

Luke Keser Urban Designer	Luci Tolic Civil Engineer
Nam Cao Urban Designer	Hunter Antanbague Civil Engineer
Samantha Eilert Urban Designer	Justin Ray Civil Engineer

Urban Design students were grouped with Civil Engineers to achieve the creation of a design that both integrated ADA accessibility and Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) successfully. The teams were selected by specific expertise and assigned to two streets on campus, 19th Street and Jefferson Ave, where the team broke into specific focuses on those sites: 19th Street needed a solution for ADA connectivity up the steep slope on campus, and Jefferson Ave called for a maximization of GSI. With these objectives in mind, the teams carefully proposed and analyzed three different possibilities for each before effectively finding a solution that supports the needs of the community and goals of the project.

Goals

19th Street

- Improve pedestrian safety
- Enhance accessibility
- Improve campus connectivity

Jefferson Ave

- Implement GSI
- Mitigate toxic runoff
- Pedestrian Circulation
- GSI education

Design Requirements

19th Street

- Achieve ADA compliance
- Overcome elevation of 40 feet per block
- Emergency vehicle access

Jefferson Ave

- Emergency vehicle access
- Maximum RO capacity
- Infiltration GSI
- Achieve regulatory compliance



Collaborative work session. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

Collaboration Timeline

Spring Quarter 2026

Project Assigned: 2/17
Feasibility Check: 2/24
Technical Pressure Test: 3/3
Pre-Selection Engineering Final Review: 3/10
Design Selection: 3/17

Urban Design students were assigned the development of a technically grounded design that aligned with findings in our community engagement. Each urban design student from each group was assigned a different scenario of a design and partnered with civil engineering students through out the Winter quarter, before finalizing a selected design scenario for the street to continue into the Spring quarter.



Collaborative work sessions. Photos courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

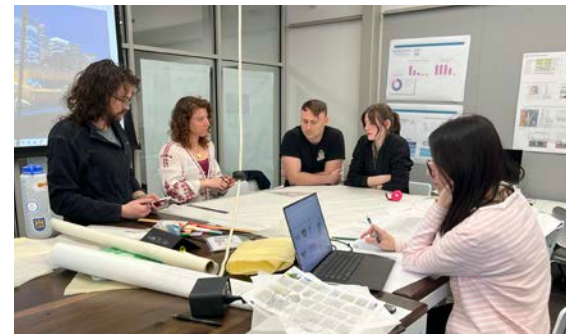
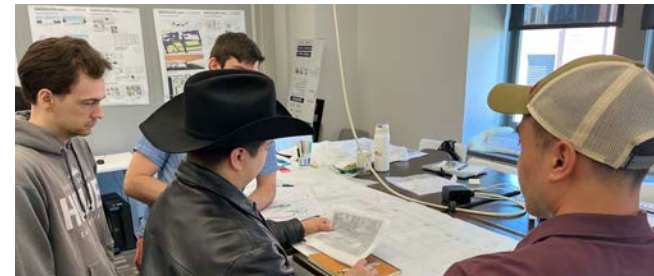
Deliverables Checklist

- Site plan to scale
- Section cuts/views
- ADA compliance
- Implementation of GSI strategies
- Pedestrian circulation
- Cycling strategy

Winter Quarter 2026

Interdisciplinary kickoff: 4/2
Agreement on concept: 4/9
Design handover from UDE to CE: 4/16
Consultation checkpoint: 4/30
Consultation checkpoint: 5/14
Design renders finalized for presentation: 5/27

Proceeding the selection of the concept for each street, both groups then spent the first two weeks of the Winter quarter fleshing out how the design will work best and drawing. The urban design students handed over nearly finalized deliverables to civil engineering students. Calculations were made to ensure measurements and design would be viable, and final renderings were finalized and prepared for presentation at the SET Civil Engineering showcase.



Collaborative work sessions. Photos courtesy of Bára Šafářová.



UDE Cohort walking site. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

BIG Masterplan Takeaway

Parking has been an issue for UW Tacoma students for years on years, with many students advocating for more. A big critique we took away from tearing the BIG masterplan was the number of parking that is being proposed. UW Tacoma, according to the framework, is preparing to bring in 11 integrated parking garages onto campus. This will add 1680 parking stalls on the site, allowing for 1909 cars to park.

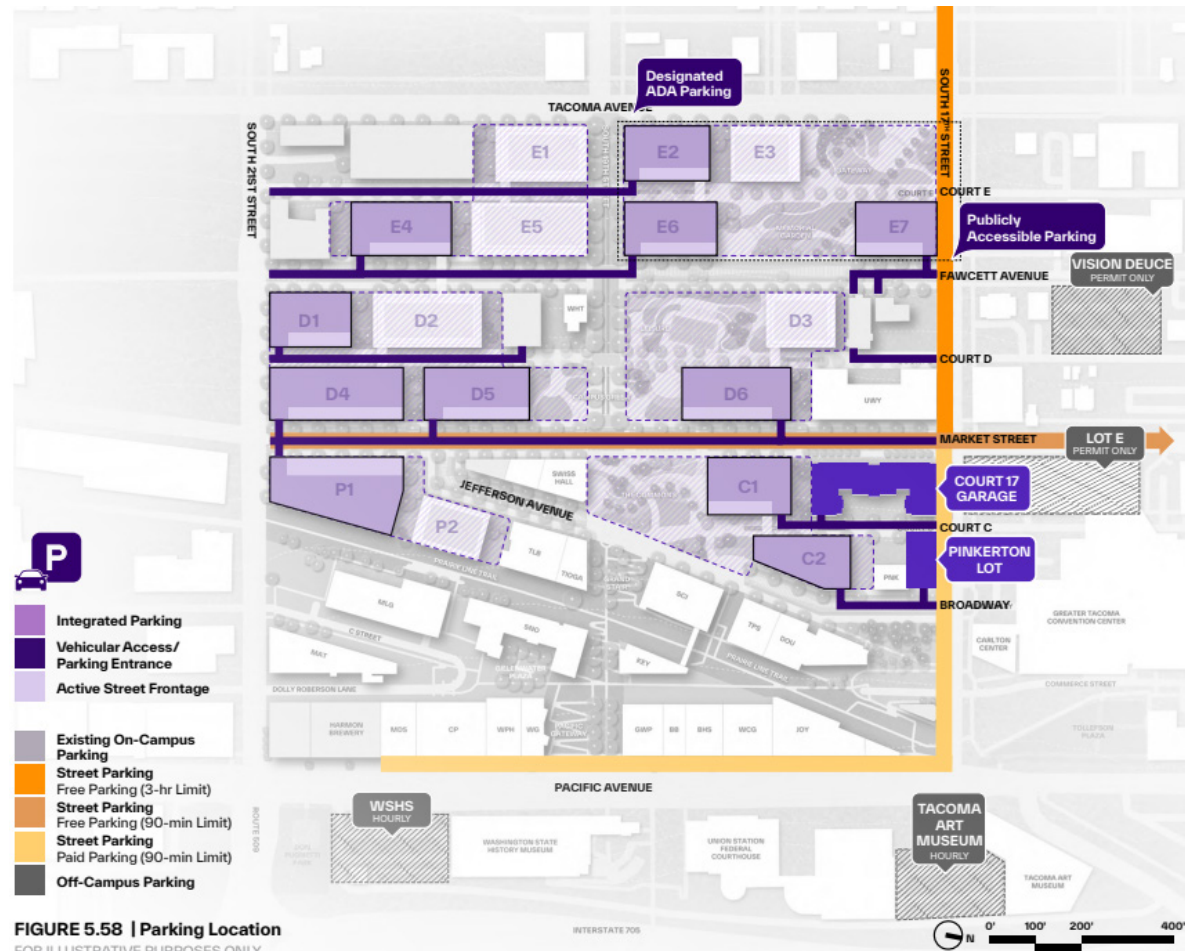
While the proposal may seem exciting to students, it fails to allow the campus to transition away from being a commuter school. While our campus will always be considered a commuter school, this plan

DEVELOPMENT ZONE	DEVELOPMENT LOT	DEVELOPMENT LOT SIZE	NUMBER OF INTEGRATED PARKING FLOORS	TOTAL PARKING AREA (GSF)	AVERAGE PARKING STALLS
PROPOSED NEW DEVELOPMENT					
P-SOUTH	P1	37,817 SF	2	75,634 GSF	229
	P2	15,700 SF	0	0 GSF	0
C-NORTH	C1	22,445 SF	2	44,890 GSF	136
	C2	19,271 SF	2	38,542 GSF	117
D-SOUTH	D1	20,562 SF	2	41,124 GSF	125
	D2	27,612 SF	0	0 GSF	0
	D4	32,402 SF	2	64,804 GSF	196
D-NORTH	D5	25,635 SF	2	51,270 GSF	155
	D3	17,624 SF	0	0 GSF	0
	D6	26,437 SF	2	52,874 GSF	160
E-SOUTH	E1	23,786 SF	0	0 GSF	0
	E4	24,725 SF	2	49,450 GSF	150
	E5	28,749 SF	0	0 GSF	0
E-NORTH	E2	22,200 SF	2	44,400 GSF	135
	E3	18,000 SF	0	0 GSF	0
	E6	23,000 SF	2	46,000 GSF	139
	E7	20,115 SF	2	40,230 GSF	122
EXISTING PARKING LOTS					
Pinkerton Parking Lot		10,000 SF	-	10,000	30
Court 17 Garage		23,540 SF	3	70,620	214
TOTAL PARKING LOTS					1,909
PARKING/FTE RATIO (Excluding on-street parking)					19%

Parking stalls table from masterplan. Photo courtesy of Bjarke Ingles Group.

makes little to no effort in taking a step towards becoming a community core.

After calculating costs for what this would need at a minimum average of \$60k for parking stall, this proposal will require (at minimum) \$100.8 million to be completed, taking a significant portion of resources to parking infrastructure alone.



BIG Masterplan proposal for Parking strategy. Diagram courtesy of Bjarke Ingles Group.

BIG masterplan depicts beautiful renderings of activated shared streets that seem to prioritize people and micromobility, but with proposal of 11 parking garages, the masterplan depicts an inaccurate representation of what these spaces look like.

The proposed traffic flow threatens the safety and usability of these new pedestrian streets, creating an unsafe urban environment.

The lack of clarity raises serious concerns about what these routes would look like during a rush, how congestion will be handled, and how people and cars will mix in these spaces, creating unsafe environments for pedestrians when they are meant for the prioritization of pedestrians.



BIG Masterplan rendering of shared street. Photo courtesy of Bjarke Ingles Group.



BIG Masterplan rendering of shared street. Photo courtesy of Bjarke Ingles Group.

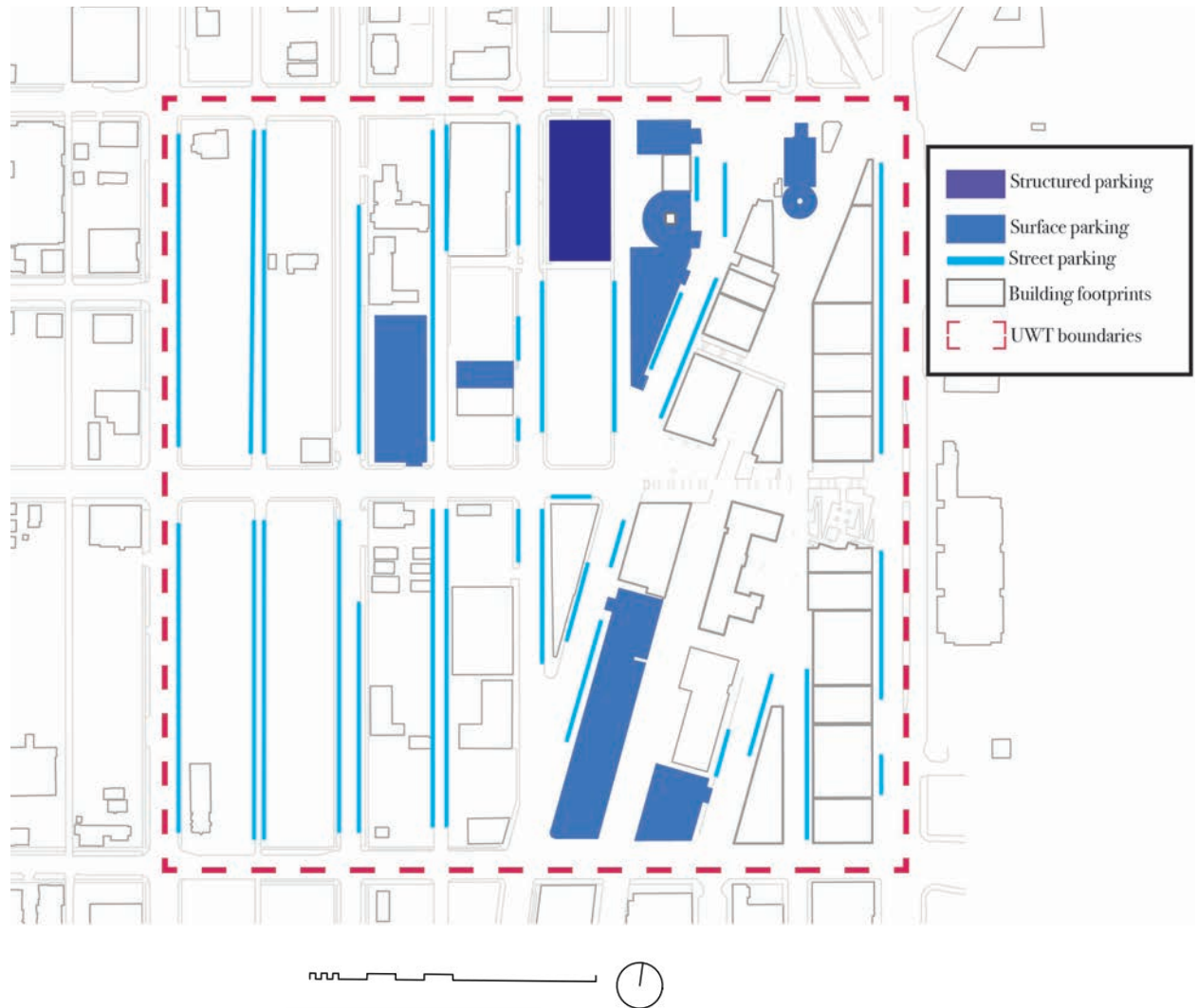
Existing Conditions

Existing conditions of UW Tacoma consist of activation residing on the Eastern side of the site where all of the current institutional buildings are. The Western side of campus remains vacant for the most part, with developments growing with the expansion of the site.

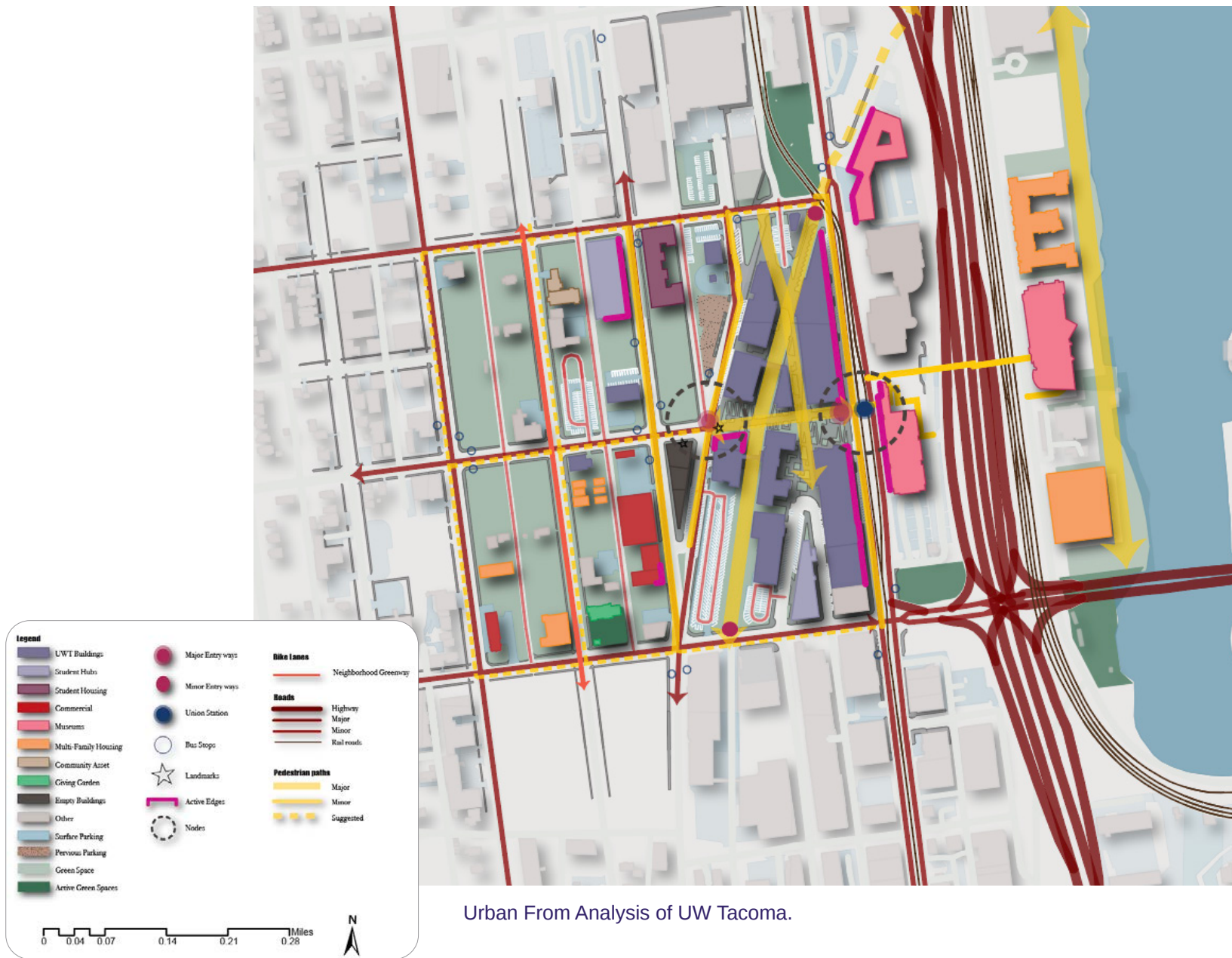
As campus stands now, there consists of about 750 total parking stalls, not including street parking.



Existing drawing of UW Tacoma campus.



Existing parking infrastructure on campus. Base map courtesy of Laurence Applen.



Urban Form Analysis of UW Tacoma.



UDE Cohort during community engagement event. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

Why Transportation?

For our Community Engagement, we narrowed down our focus onto what students will be most passionate about: parking.

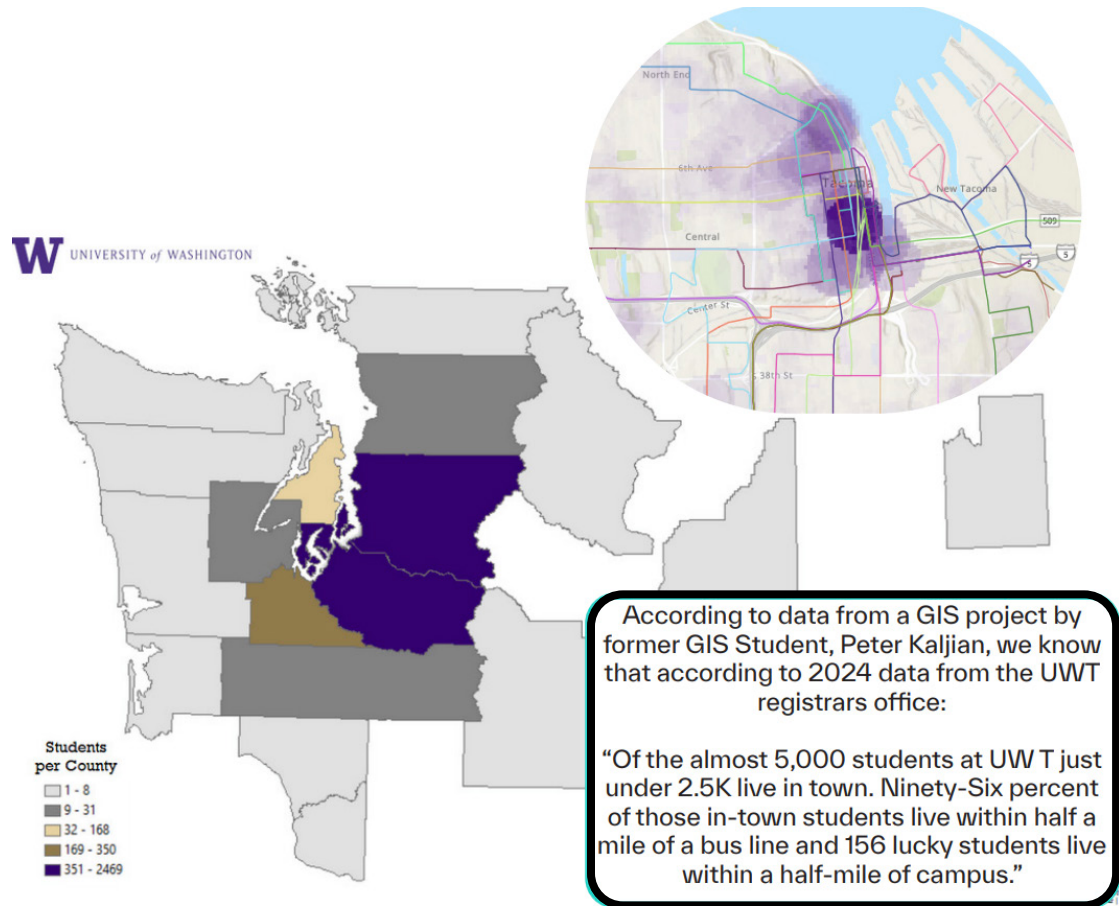
Our takeaways from the critique of the masterplan, specifically speaking to proposed parking infrastructure, showed us that the need for parking is merely a symptom of a larger transportation issue.

Goals

- Better understand student commuting habits and potentially change current behaviors.
- Reduce cars on campus to allow for realistic pedestrianized streets.

Starting Questions

- Are 11 parking garages necessary?
- How can we get students that drive alone to change their commute behaviors?
- How can we push for students to be interested in other modes of transportation?



GIS map of students per county. Map courtesy of Peter Kaljian.

Strategies

Through the process of planning for our community engagement, we put a variety of methods on the table before concluding on how we were going to reach the UW Tacoma student body. We wanted to aim for specifically and only students since UWT does not transportation data on students.

- Wide scale Google survey
- Mentimeter presentations in classrooms
- YMCA tabling events
- Interviewing
- Husky Commons event

Surveys

We based our Google survey on the CRT in attempt to gain that information for students, as well as more detailed insights on transportation motivations and background information.

To reach as many students as possible, we scheduled multiple classroom visits for a rapid class survey to collect more surface level information and act as a promotion for the larger online survey.

Events

To spread more awareness of our outreach, we held 4 tabling events at the University Y to push for students to fill out our survey and invite them to our event in the Husky Commons.

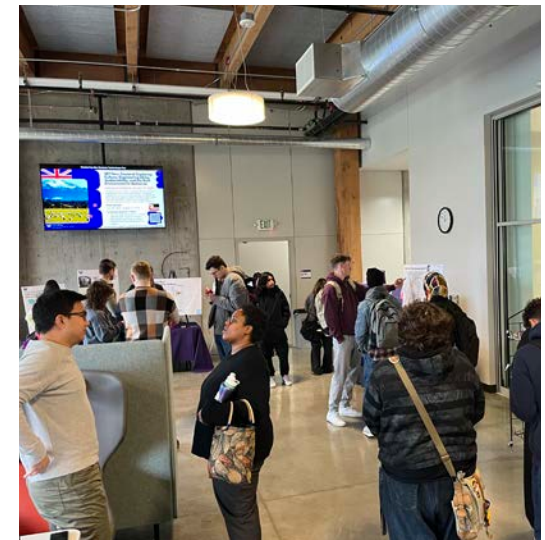
There, the event was an opportunity to gain a deeper connection with students to better understand their “why?” and hear student ideas.



Flyer for survey. Made by self.



YMCA Tabling Event. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.



Husky Commons Event. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

Takeaways

The results gains from our Community Engagment were both expected and surprising.

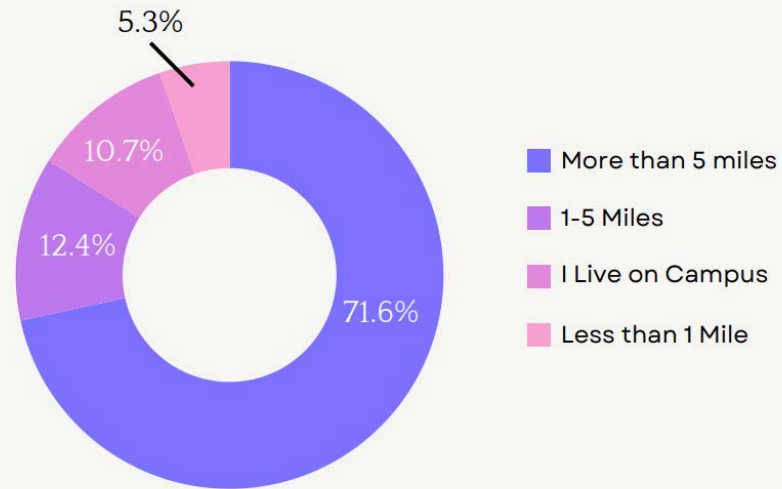
Expected results:

- majority of responders said their reasoning for driving alone was for convenience.
- Large number of students live outside of the 1-5 mile radius.

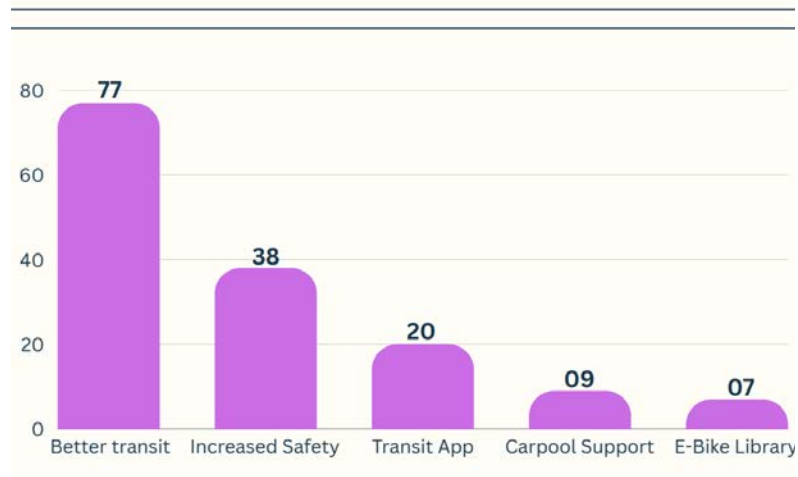
Surprising results:

- Students that lived further away were more enthusiastic about Public Transit than students that were closer to campus.
- 30-37% of responders were open to e-bike library.
- Students living on campus still use a car for grocery shopping, etc.
- Some students preferred housing focus rather tha parking focus.

HOW FAR DO YOU COMMUTE TO CAMPUS? (ONE WAY)



WHAT WOULD MOTIVATE YOU TO NOT DRIVE ALONE

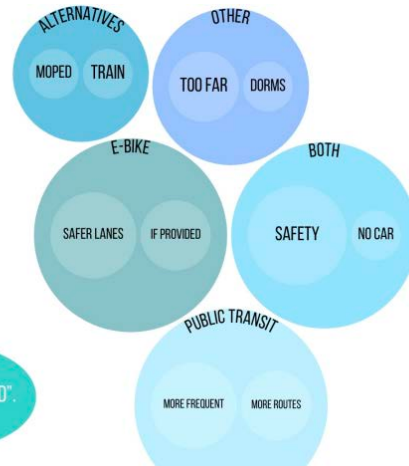


Google Survey results. Infographics courtesy of Luke Keser.

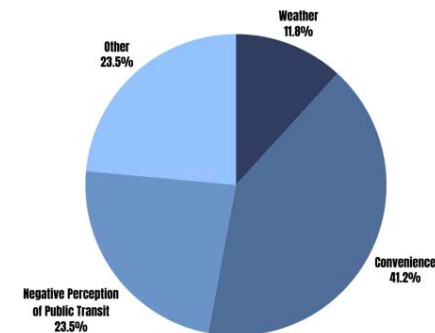
What would make you consider using an e-bike or taking public transit?

"BIKING IS TOO DANGEROUS."

"WOULD LOVE TO BIKE IF I COULD AFFORD OR IF IT WAS PROVIDED."



If you live within 5 miles, why do you drive?



"BIKE GETS WET WHEN IT RAINS"

"DONT' WANT TO SWEAT GOING UP HILL."

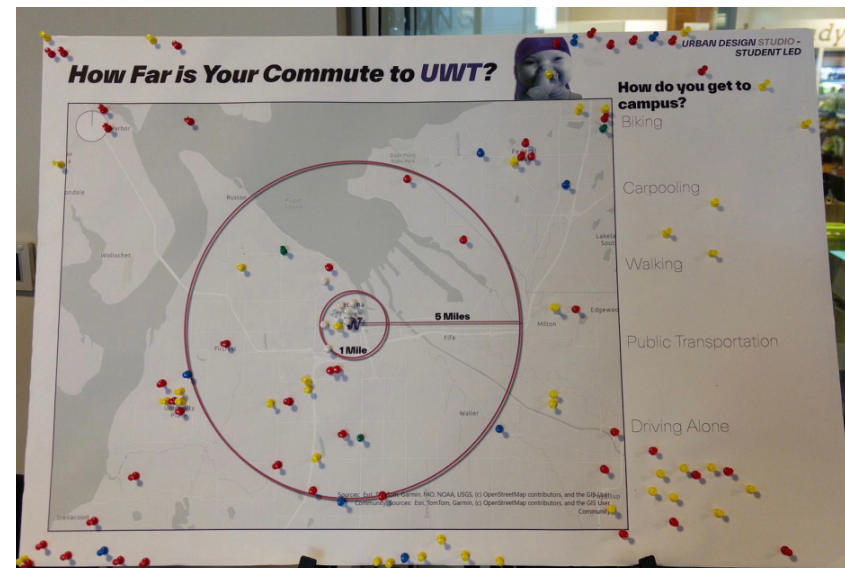
"ROUTES DON'T FEEL SAFE DURING PEAK TIME."

"NOT MANY HOUSING OPTIONS NEARBY."

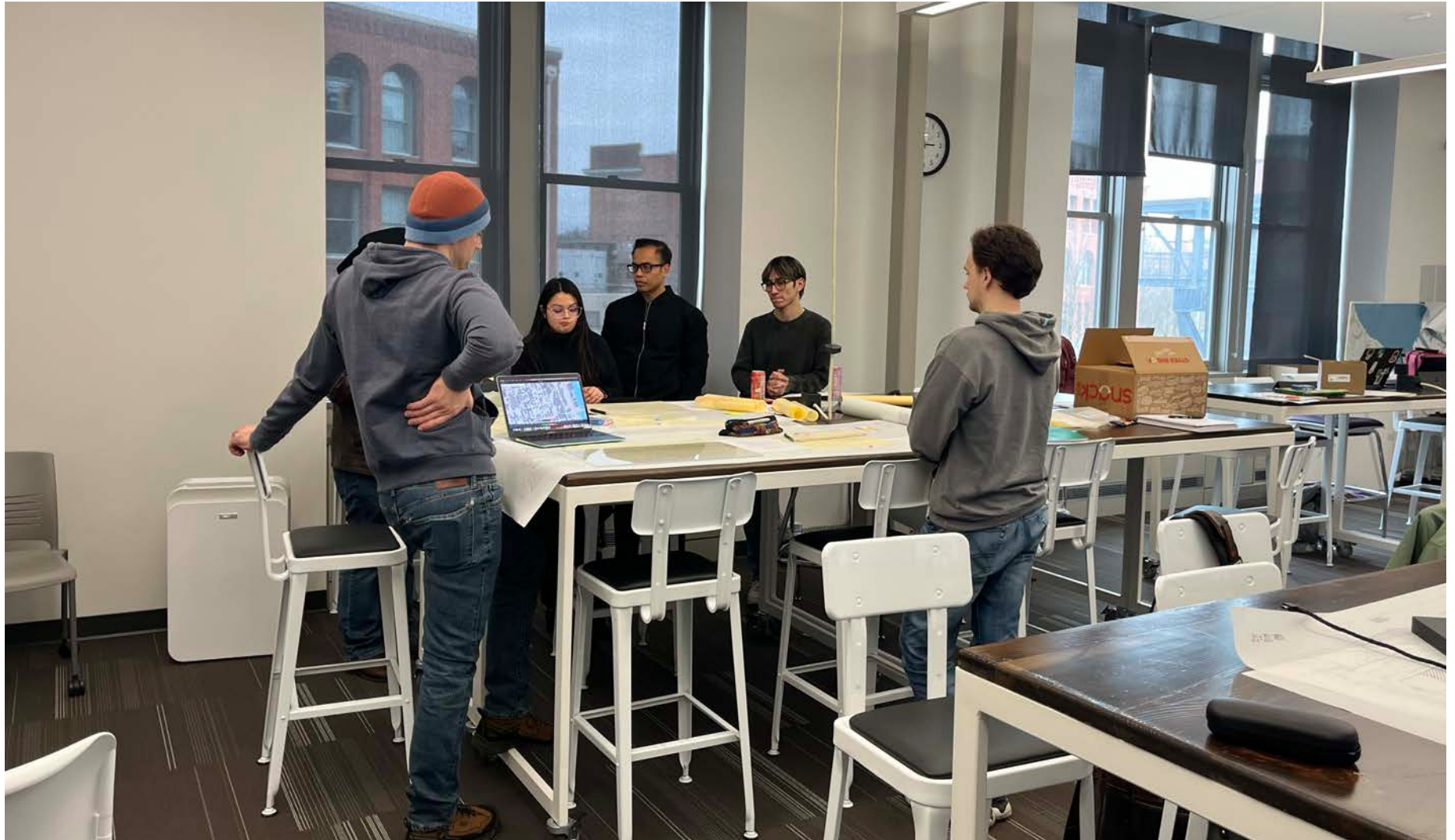
Infographics showcasing results from poster boards. Courtesy of self.



Husky Commons Event. Photo courtesy of UDE students.



Poster board results. Photo courtesy of UDE students.



19th Street group work session. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

Initial Concepts

The 19th street interdisciplinary group had the main objective of expanding accessibility up the hill as the UW Tacoma campus expands. The Civil Engineers found that three concepts would be best for the site, each of which was assigned to an Urban Design student.

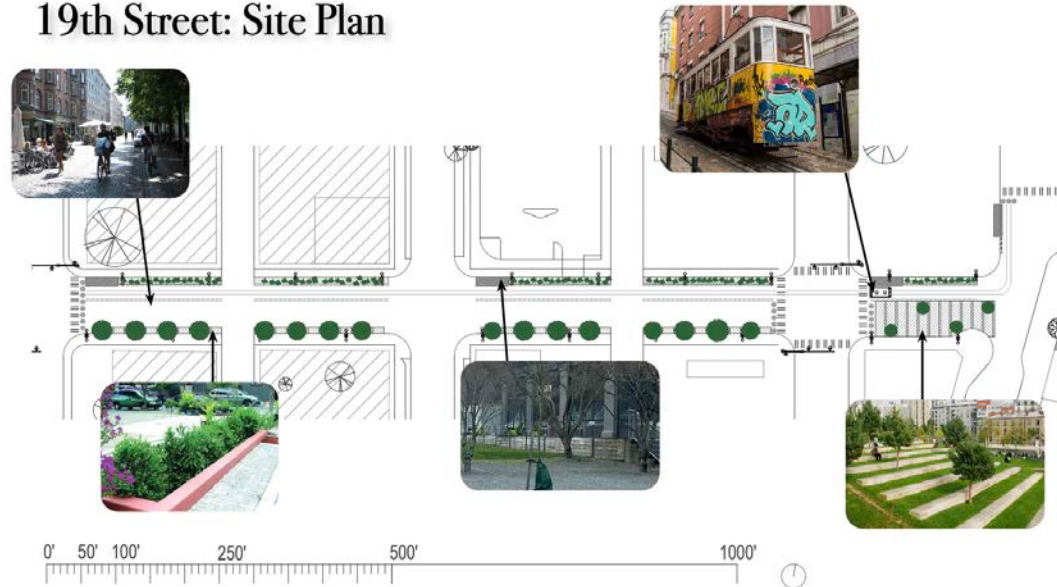
- Full Pedestrianization: Zachariah Manalese
- Multimodal: Laurence Applen
- Trolley: Ariana Orozco Perez, Bryden Punsalan



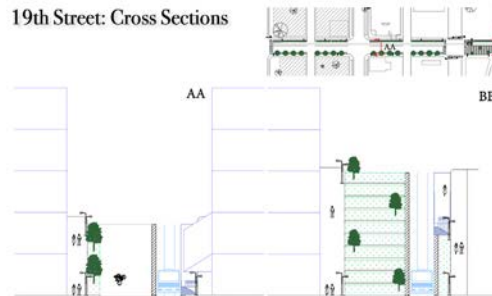
Collaborative work session. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafařová.

Trolley Concept

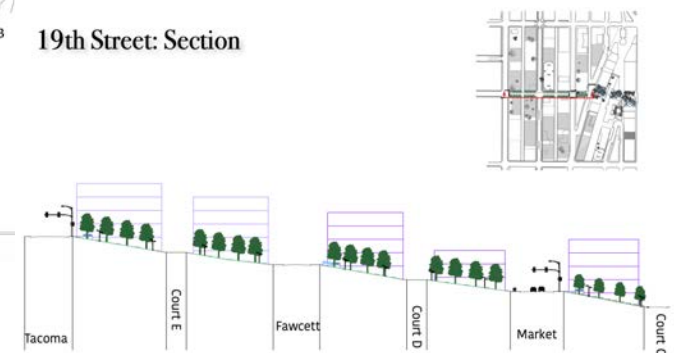
19th Street: Site Plan



19th Street: Cross Sections



19th Street: Section



Initial Sketches of Selected Concept

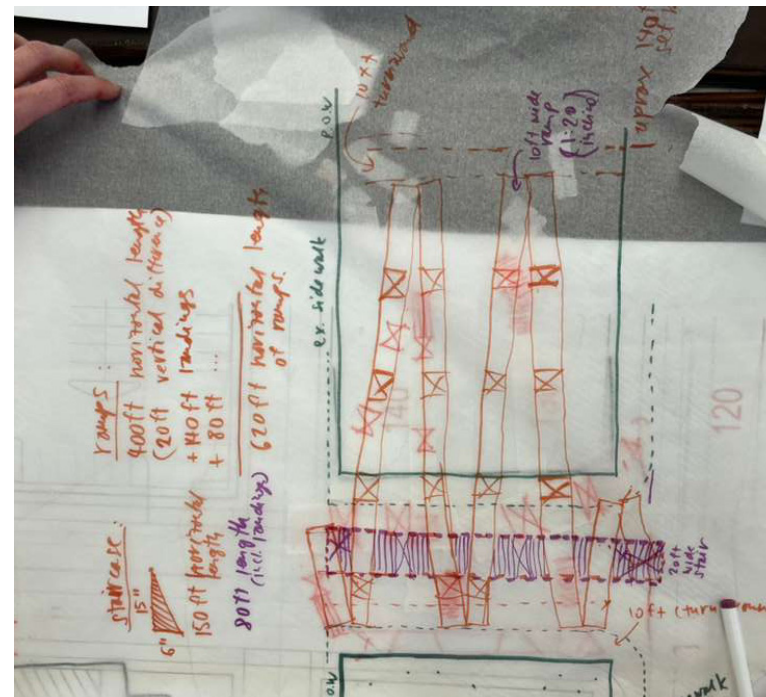
Following the process of designing concepts and doing further calculations, the final selection for the design our group proceeded with was fully pedestrianizing 19th street to prioritize people connectivity up the hill.

Our goal of achieving an accessible route up the hill remained. The current condition of 19th street exceeds 8.33% ADA threshold, making it inaccessible for users of wheeled devices. With the expansion of campus, our design aims to achieve connectivity up the hill.

The design our group proceeded with was an expansion of the already existing ADA route on campus, along with the UWT Grand Staircase. Our calculations were done using a 1:20 slope ratio, equaling a need for 620 feet of horizontal ramp length including landings.

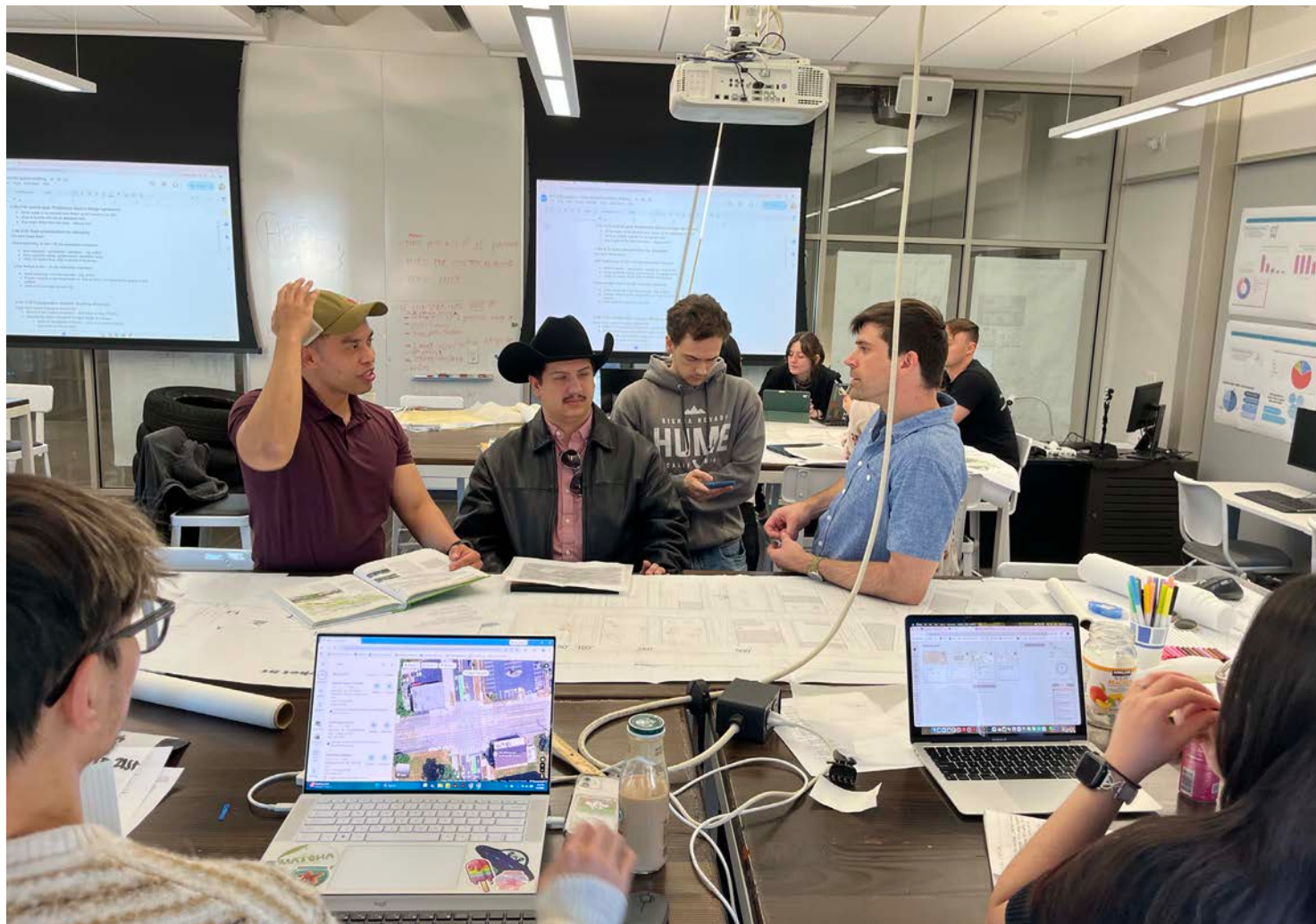


Initial sketch drawn by self.



Initial sketch of calculations. Photo courtesy of Laurence Appen.

In Class Work Session



Collaborative work session. Photo courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

Feedback Session during LMN Visit

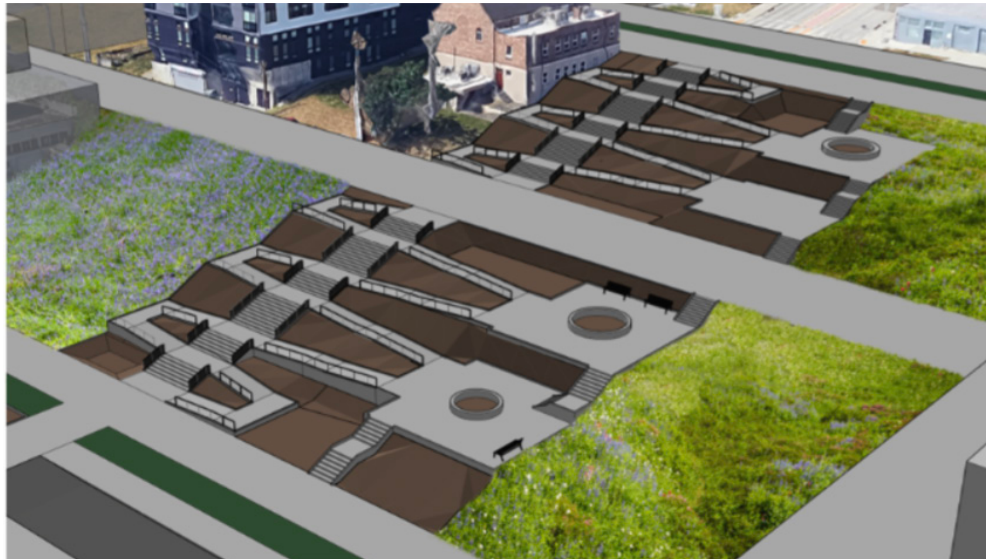


Photos courtesy of Bára Šafářová.

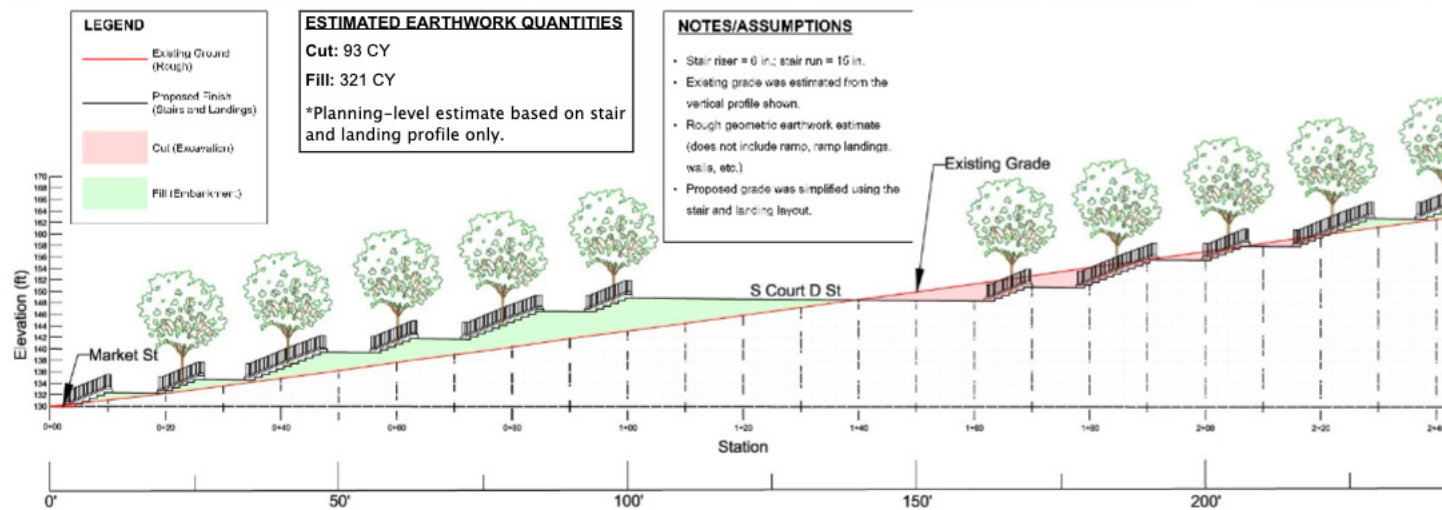
Final Products



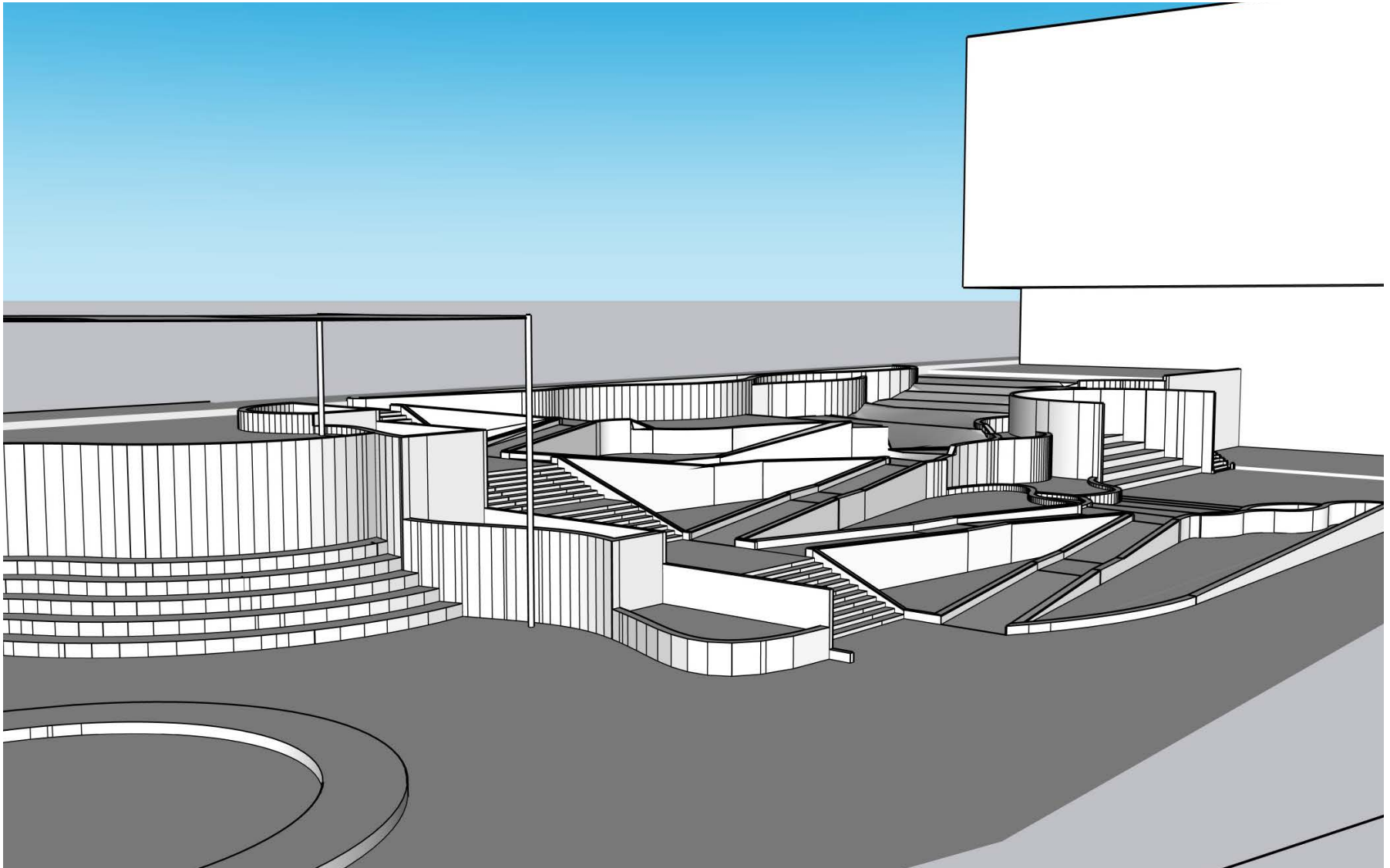
Rendered site plan. Design drawn by Ariana Orozco Perez and Zachariah Manalese, drawing rendered by Laurence Applen.



3D model of design. Courtesy of Laurence Applen.



19th Street section cut and Earthwork calculations. Site section created by Laurence Applen, Earthwork done by Dennis Quiocho.





ARIANA OROZCO PEREZ

Urban Design Approach

My focal point with my design was to activate the core of campus, creating a comfortable and accessible space. Connecting to other proposals, my design aims to connect to the proposed 19th Street corridor and the cleanse of cars at the core of campus, in effort to create a lively space that allows for a multitude of activities.

The framework takes a focus on allowing for the core of campus to be people centered with limitations on vehicle access. My proposal aims to decrease number of parking stalls pushing parking structures to the edges of campus and utilize parking that exists off campus. With limitations on vehicle network on campus, this allows for more focus on creating spaces that attract usage.

The quad is a the planned student corridor at the center of campus, being a location of opportunity to draw community into the core. UW Tacoma sits on a hill, creating a constraint in access through campus and in the corridor. 19th street, being the current major road that runs across campus, sits at about a 12% grade with 20 feet of elevation, making movement up the hill incredibly difficult for users of wheeled devices, and for users to use the site comfortably. The minimum requirements for a slope to be ADA accessible is a 1:12, the current condition of the site sits at a 1:8 slope, making the site inaccessible to all users.



Quad Reimagined

The quad proposal consists of creating an urban living room at the core of campus that is activated with spaces for student gathering opportunities, flowing with comfortability in using the space. Accessible movement up the hill is a large focus in the design, in a way that is organized and connected in the public realm. The design proposes an expansion of the existing ADA route through campus, as well as the grand stair case up the hill. The proposed ramp system in the quad will be a 1:15 ratio that connects multiple public patios through longer paths of gradual elevation.

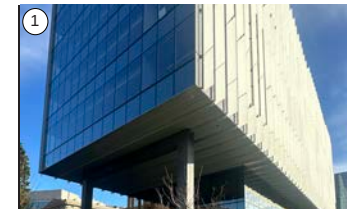
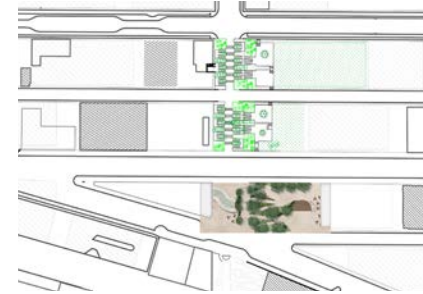


Image Courtesy of Ariana Orozco Perez

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Image Courtesy of Ariana Orozco Perez

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ARIANA OROZCO PEREZ

Street Sections

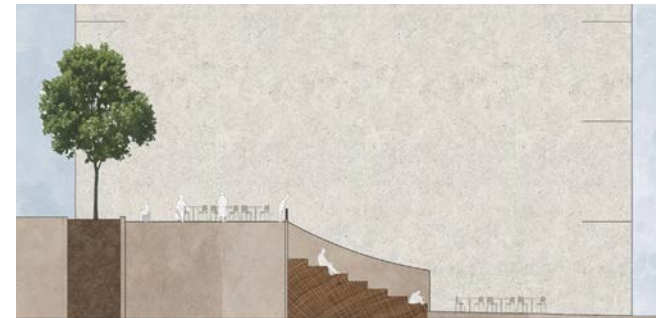
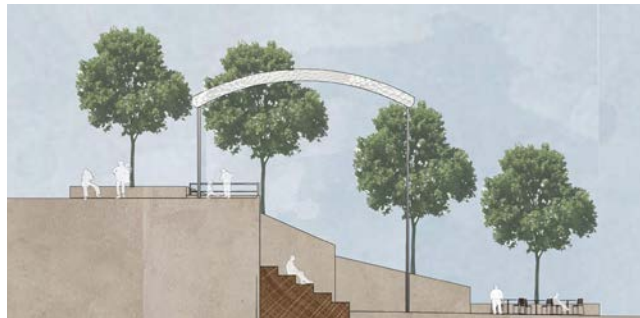
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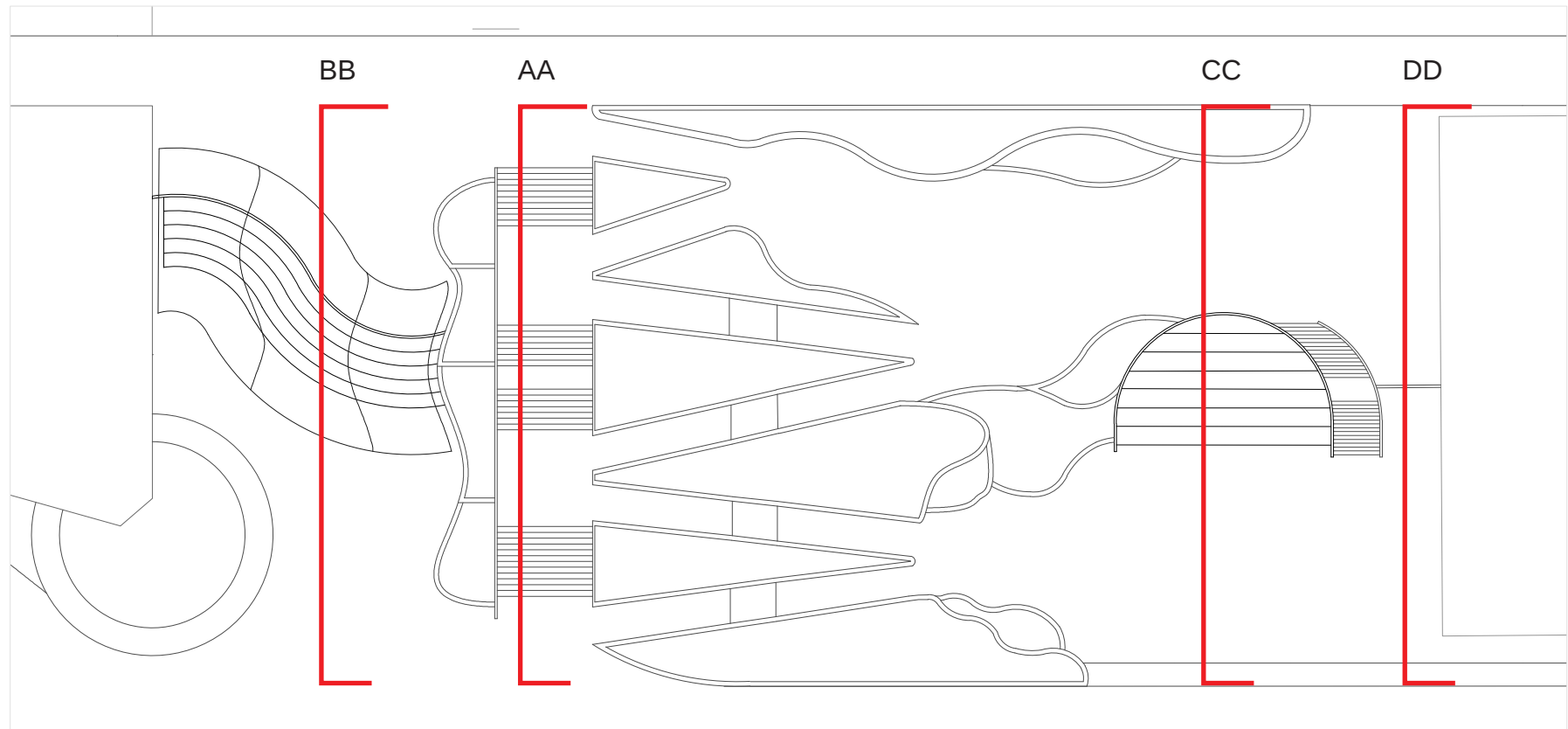


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Quad Site Plan

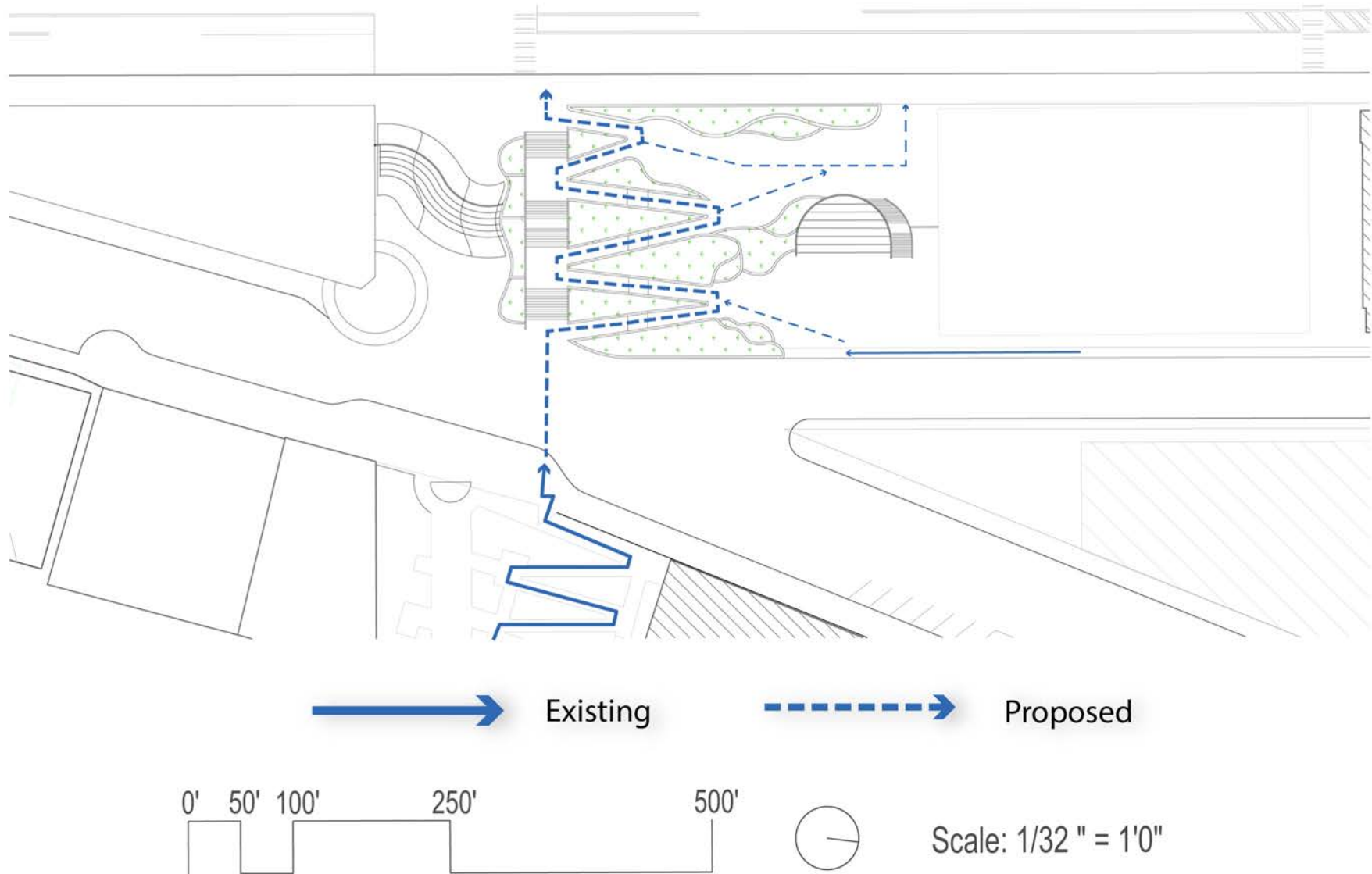


0' 50' 100' 250' 500'



Scale: 1/32" = 1'0"

ADA Connectivity



Pedestrian Circulation

