

Campus Planning Input: Ideas and Suggestions

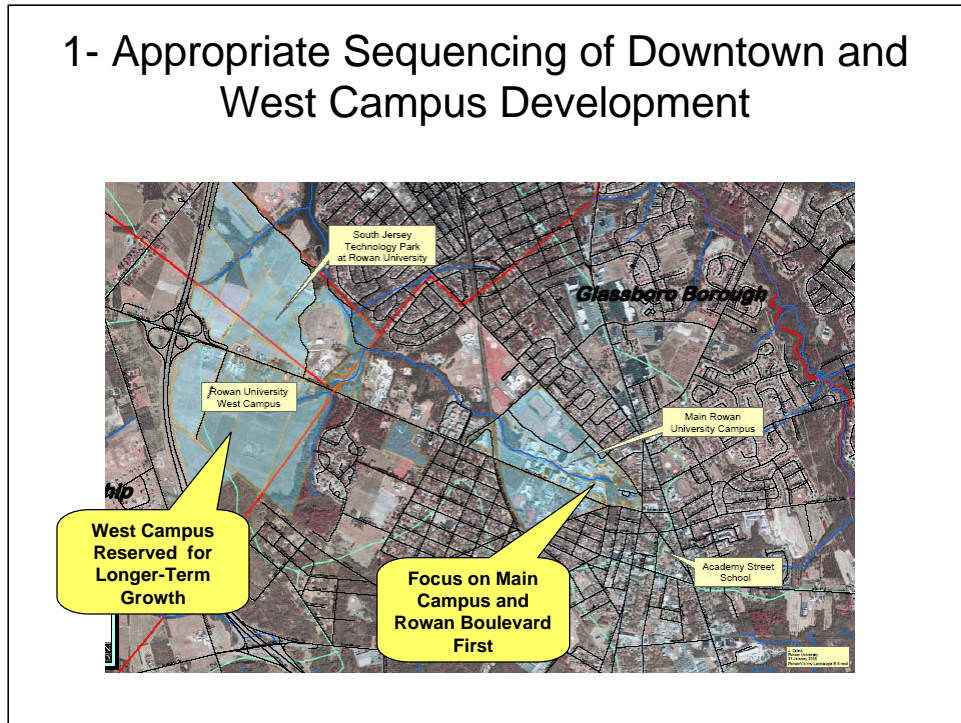
To: Sasaski Associates: campus master planners

From: Rowan Master Planning Committee:
Subcommittee on Building Siting, Land Use and
Environment

March 2005

This report provides selected planning suggestions/ideas that the Subcommittee on Building Siting, Land Use and Environment would like to offer to the current master plan development process. These ideas originate from discussions within the committee and are based in the direct experience of the campus committee members over past years and decades. The ideas are intended to address a number of significant campus land use, building siting and environmental challenges and opportunities that currently exist on the campus while achieving the goals of the Master Planning Guiding Principles. The committee offers these ideas as an aid to the Master Planning consultant in order to help stimulate ideas for creative design solutions and to address specific problems and opportunities that the committee has observed through their collective campus experience and professional expertise.

1- Appropriate Sequencing of Downtown and West Campus Development



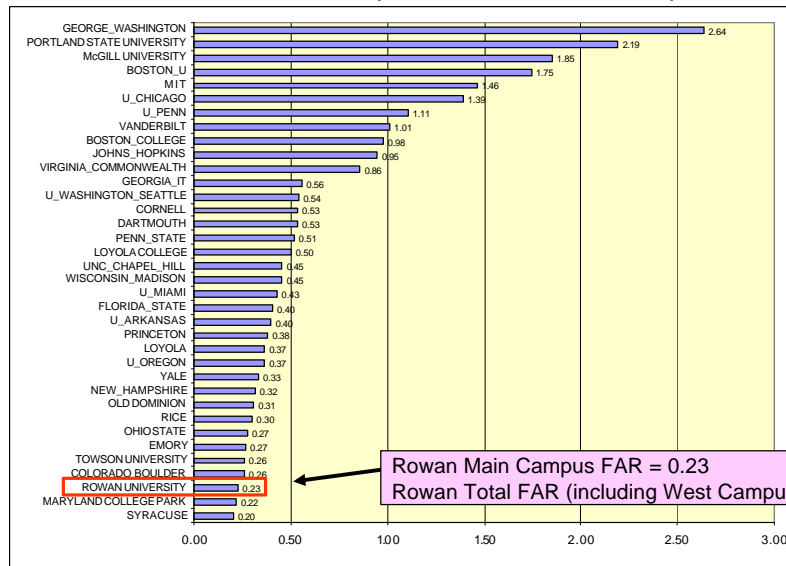
Sequencing and timing in land development are critical. Careful consideration should be given to the sequencing and timing of Main and West Campus development in order to ensure the most successful and functional outcome. While relocating sporting facilities to West Campus needs to occur in order to free room for Main Campus expansion, other West Campus uses such as academic and housing must be carefully considered in their timing.

The committee strongly suggest that early development emphasis must be concentrated on the Main Campus coordinated with Glassboro downtown revitalization and Rowan Boulevard. In its current condition Main Campus needs a lot of work and fortunately holds a lot of potential for becoming the aesthetically inspiring and functional campus envisioned in the MPC Guiding Principles. The success of Glassboro's redevelopment will also hinge on Rowan creating a critical density of activity on Main campus and enhancing the pedestrian connection with Rowan Boulevard. The success of Main Campus and downtown revitalization may be undermined by premature development of academic or residential buildings on West Campus.

Development of university buildings on West campus should occur only after the Main Campus and downtown has reached a level of success and functionality. West Campus should be viewed as first a place for moving sports facilities and second as a land reserve for longer-term growth of the university.

2- Need for Main Campus Densification

Floor Area Ratio Comparison of Selected Campuses

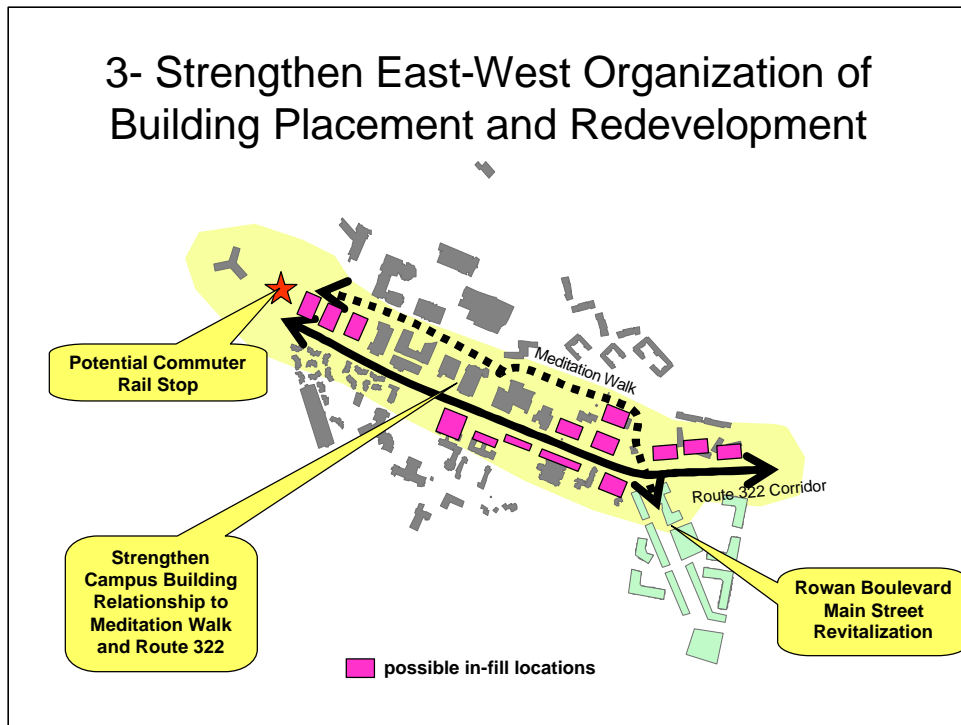


Source: Ayers Saint Gross Campus Comparisons
http://www.asg-architects.com/fs_comparing.html

The current density of Main campus as measured in Floor Area Ratio (FAR) is substantially less than many other comparable campuses. Building density is important to create a vibrant pedestrian critical mass of activity. Considerable opportunities exist for increasing the building density on Main campus. The need (and opportunity) for densification is particularly true on the eastern end of campus adjacent to the future Rowan Boulevard. Successful town centers need density.

Increasing density will accomplish better land coordination, pedestrianism and environmental goals of the Guiding Principles. Increasing building heights from current 1 and 2 floor to 4 or 5 stories will result in a more efficient, more functional, more energy efficient and less environmentally impacting land use pattern. Considering Rowan's history, aesthetic goals, and impact on the community of Glassboro, densification should occur very carefully with traditional tree-lined walkways and lush landscaping rather than a highly urban approach. Therefore densification should be creatively planned with a mixture of soft and hard, green and built environments, and attention to compatible design.

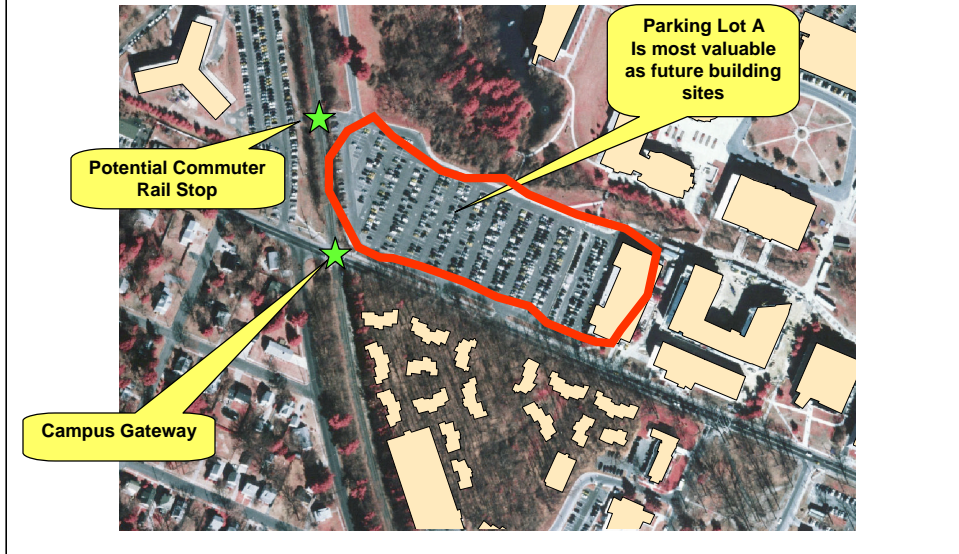
3- Strengthen East-West Organization of Building Placement and Redevelopment



Rowan's Main Campus building layout is currently not well organized. What organization does exist consists of several quads and a linear theme along Route 322 (Bosshart, Savitz, Library, Student Center). But the linear theme is not mirrored on the south side of Route 322. With the construction of Rowan Boulevard downtown revitalization to the east and a possible future commuter rail station to the west at the Conrail tracks, there is a strong rationale for strengthening the linear east-west building organizational theme from the rail station to Rowan Boulevard. There is substantial opportunity for infill and redevelopment along the Route 322 corridor on both the north and south sides. The streetscape on the south side of Route 322 must be strengthened to make a better pedestrian connection from the townhouses to Rowan Boulevard. Infill could help to accomplish this.

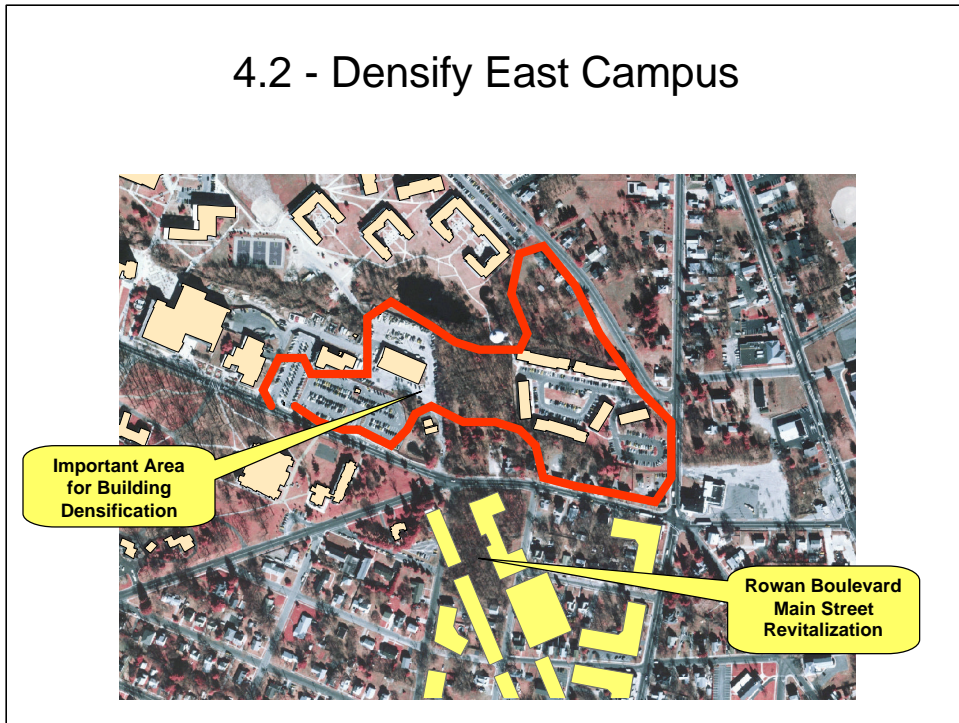
The linear theme also works well because the main pedestrian corridor (Mediation Walk) parallels the east-west organization creating a aesthetic and environmentally engaging green corridor on the "back" sides of buildings. Meditation Walk unifies the linear building organization on the interior North side of campus and would benefit greatly by extension to Rowan Boulevard.

4.1- Build on Existing Impervious Surface Minimize Environmental Impact of New Buildings-



A number of parking lots exist in prime locations for future building sites. As sports fields are moved to West Campus, surface parking can be reoriented further toward the periphery where various sports fields currently exist. Any new surface parking should creatively handle storm water runoff. Parking within the core campus zone should be multilevel garages only.

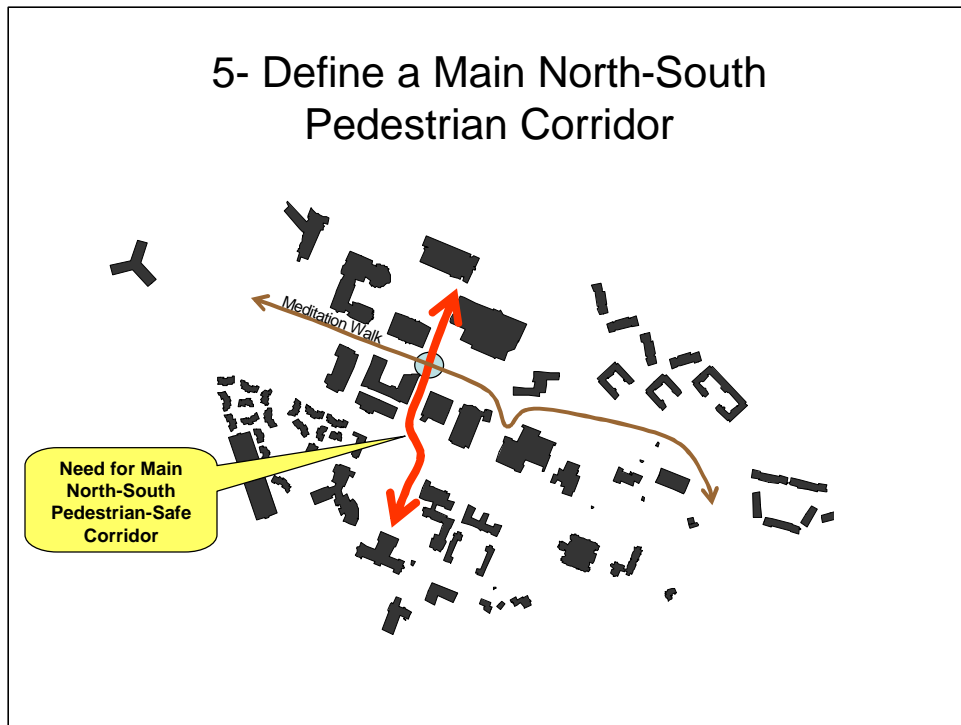
4.2 - Densify East Campus



East Campus presents one of the most important areas for building densification in order to create a strong collaborative relationship with Glassboro revitalization. This site is well suited for higher density residential housing in order to support Rowan Boulevard (and visa versa).

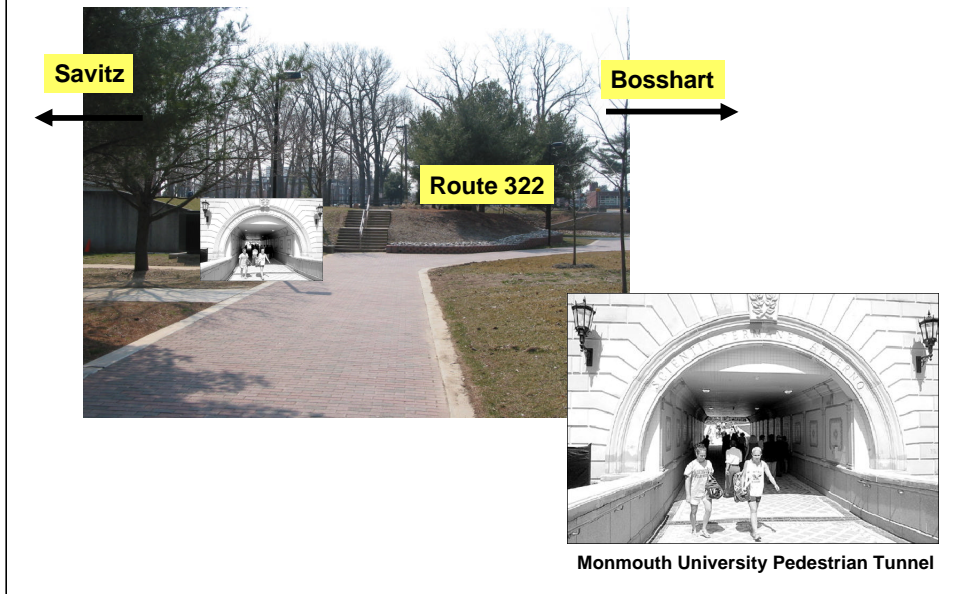
The corner parcel (across from the Landmark Restaurant) should be considered for some type of “anchor” building type.

5- Define a Main North-South Pedestrian Corridor



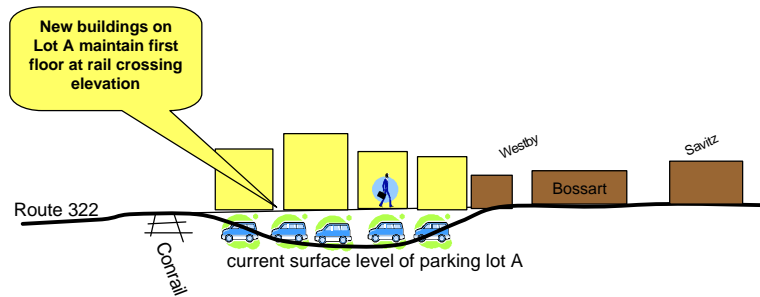
The need and opportunity exists for creating a main North-South pedestrian corridor. This corridor should connect Bunce Hall and the New Education Building (the most significant landmark buildings on the north and south extents of campus) This pedestrian promenade could be the focus of creatively designed outdoor space and landscaping. The intersection of the North-South promenade and Meditation Walk could be designed to be the physical heart of campus with a landmark such as a monument/fountain/artwork etc.

5.1 Pedestrian Underpass Under Route 322



Since the elevation of Meditation walk is a level lower than the street level of Route 322, there is an opportunity to create a much-needed grade-separated crossing of Route 322. A pedestrian tunnel under Route 322 would be ideal. The change in elevation from meditation walk to Route 322 shown in this picture provides opportunity for a tunnel without “going below ground.” Monmouth University solved a similar highway crossing problem with a tunnel built by NJ DOT with a \$4 million federal grant.

6- Ground-floor Parking for New Buildings on Parking Lot A



Need to separate pedestrian auto conflict at Lot A

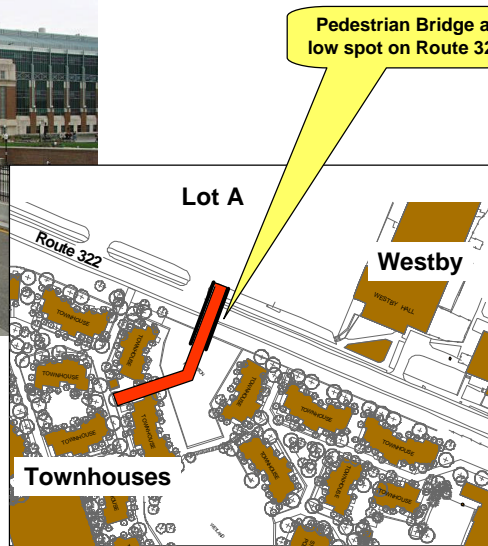
Parking lot A carries a number of significant problems and offers some valuable opportunities. Problems: 1) poor gateway image of campus coming from Route 55. 2) Poor environmental performance (huge area of impervious surface with direct discharge into stream). 3) Pedestrian/vehicular conflicts along Route 322 and within other areas. 4) is a low-density land use in an area between the core of campus and a possible future rail transit stop.

Opportunities: The locational value of this site does not warrant surface parking, however it currently serves a substantial parking function of several hundred spaces. Since the sidewalk elevation is approximately 10' higher at the rail crossing and at Bossart than at the parking lot elevation, opportunity exists for new buildings to maintain their first floor level at the rail crossing elevation while allowing "basement level" parking for employees. In essence parking lot A would still exist at its current elevation while new academic buildings could be built with the ground floor a level above the parking level.

7- Pedestrian Bridge to Townhouses



Pedestrian Bridge over Washington Avenue, Minneapolis campus, University of Minnesota



If the pedestrian level at Parking Lot A is raised above the parking lot/Route 322 level (see suggestion 6), this also facilitates the construction of a pedestrian bridge at the low point of Route 322. Since the sidewalk would be elevated from 322 at what is currently parking lot A a pedestrian bridge would not need to gain substantially in elevation. The ground elevation of the Townhouses is also substantially higher than Route 322 street level making the connection on the south side more feasible. A bridge structure could be designed in the area of the retention basin providing an opportunity to creatively redesign this unsightly feature of the townhouse complex.

8- Retrofit Retention Basin into Plaza



Raised platform over retention basin becomes outdoor space for Townhouses



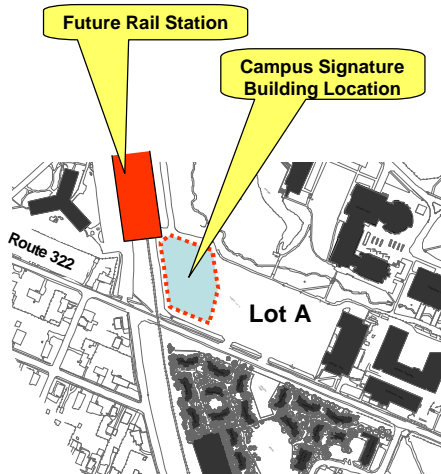
The townhouse retention basin is an unsightly and problematic landscape feature of the Main Campus. The pit collects trash and the bottom is a substantial depth from the adjacent buildings raising concerns of safety should a student find a way of falling in. There is also a lack of community recreational space in the Townhouse complex. This area could be retrofitted with a raised platform to become a plaza/recreational area for Townhouse residents. Planters could add landscaping while benches, and recreational improvements such as a basketball hoop are other possibilities. The function of the retention basin would be maintained below the platform while the space above the platform would be transformed into a usable and aesthetically attractive community space.

9- Coordinate New Building Uses with Future Rail Station



New Kessler Theater at Montclair University

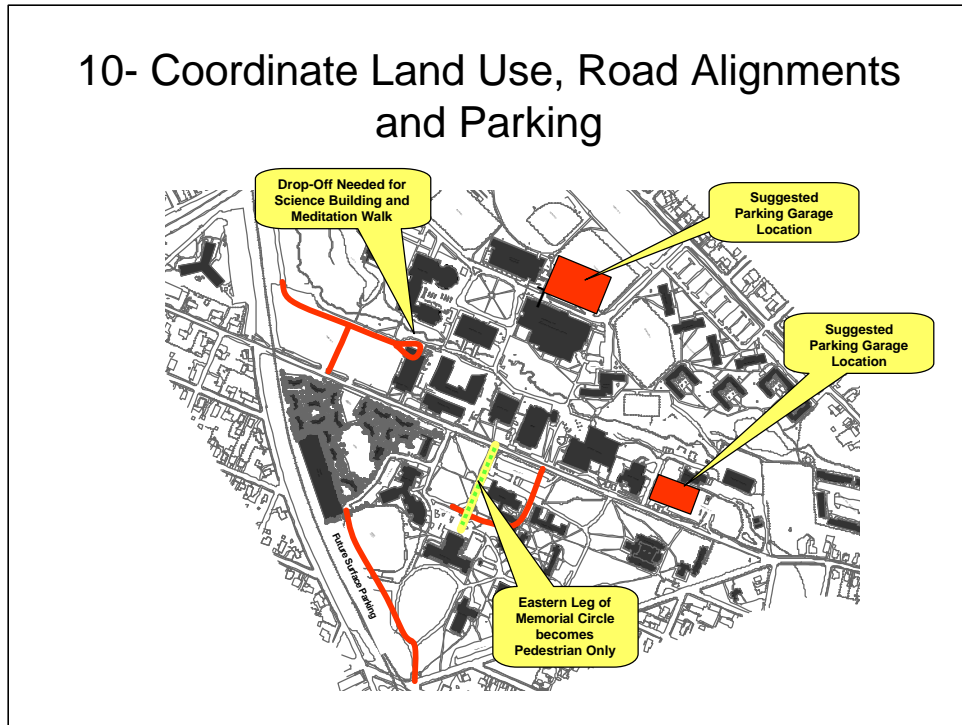
New NJ Transit Station at Montclair University



The corner of Lot A nearest the Conrail crossing is an opportunity for a “signature” building that symbolizes the entrance of Rowan University. This building should be coordinated with the possibility for a future commuter rail station on Rowan Campus. A theater might be one well-coordinated building use as patrons would benefit from a convenient commuter rail connection.

An example of a signature or gateway building is the Kessler Theater at Montclair University newly completed in 2004. The Kessler Theater is a regional venue for performing arts. Montclair also benefits from a NJ Transit station adjacent to campus. Theater patrons can easily connect from the transit stop to the Theater and the entire campus.

10- Coordinate Land Use, Road Alignments and Parking



Coordinating Land Use and Building Siting with transportation and parking is vital. New parking garages should be situated in logical locations. This diagram suggest garages that are near the recreation center and student center. These are both areas where substantial university and non-university activity warrants sufficient parking capacity within the core campus building area. The locations also serve the academic buildings such as Education and Robinson as well as future parking demand for Rowan Boulevard.

11- Create New Building Fronts on Old Buildings Facing Rt 322



The original orientation of campus was facing Bunce Circle. As time progressed the campus changed orientation to Route 322. Opportunity exist to build extensions of existing buildings to create a “front” on Route 322. Bunce, Memorial and Linden in particular present opportunities for enhancing the aesthetic from Route 322 while increasing the density of South Campus.

12 – Environmental Performance of New Buildings

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- 1.) **Designer Accountability for Energy Performance:** Going forward we should always make our building design professionals responsible for energy modeling their prototype designs. This would provide the university with important energy information to base their decisions on when various design concepts are presented. This ties directly to advancing sustainability and is consistent with the goals in the Master Plan Guiding Principles.
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- 2.) **Infrastructure Master Planning Info. for Sasaki:** Concord Engineering who has done the infrastructure planning in the past is putting together a presentation to NJHEPS on what Rowan has done to promote sustainability. The presentation will summarize work done to date and should serve as a useful summary to Sasaki in their overall master planning efforts. John Imperatore will make this presentation available to the master planning committee and Sasaki as soon as it's available.
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- 3.) **Recycling Infrastructure:** The Recycling Committee at Rowan University would like to see strict attention paid in future designs of pedestrian and bicycle walkways (*including improved and better functioning bike racks*) to incorporate improved waste/recycling systems. We would like to see not only just more containers, but the appropriate amount of recycling stations that follow Aesthetic Form while accomplishing Sustainable Function in an integrated fashion.