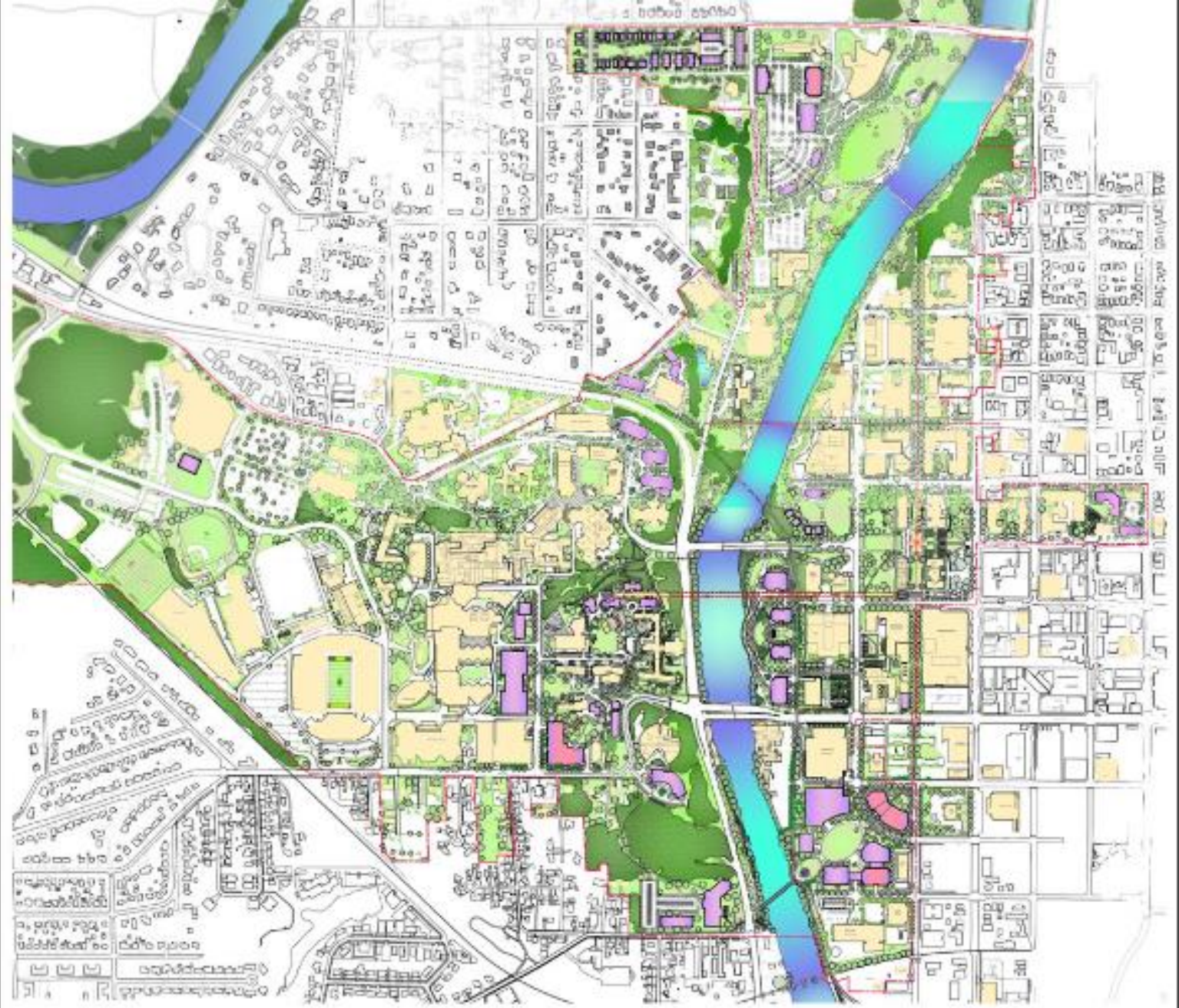


Wellness Built and Natural Environment Subcommittee

Staff Council Update

April 2023



Built Environment Subcommittee Membership

- Stratis Giannakouros, co-chair
- Megan Hammes, co-chair
- Weaver, Michael (OVPR)
- Adele Vanarsdale, Director, Campus Project Planning
- Jenna Wischmeyer, Environmental Compliance Director
- Benjamin Fish, Director of Utility Operations
- Blake Rupe, Director, Hubbell Environmental Law Initiative
- Tony Senio, Head of Athletic Grounds
- Abbie Beadle, Student Disability Services
- Jason Miller, Director, UIHC Facilities Planning and Space Management
- Michelle Harder, Senior Associate Director, Rec Services
- Shannon Watkins, Professor in Public Health
- Isabel Hogg, Student
- Alyssa Schaeffer, Student
- Kayla Whitworth, Sustainability Wellness Intern
- Brian Baxter, Recreational Services



Scope and Progress

Scope

User occupied spaces: Utilizes the campus planning process through Design Standards, Guiding Principles, and the groups focused on planning and implementation of these areas.

Campus-managed outdoor spaces: Focus will have the same institutional lens as Occupied Space with the addition of programmatic and thematic elements (Areas of historic significance, Natural areas maps, recurring campus events and programs)

Progress to date

Student Representation on the subcommittee and Wellness Intern Hire

Definition of UI Built Environment, Strengths and Opportunities

Completed [Campus Spaces and Benches Web Map](#)

Full inventory submitted December 2022

Identifying gaps and priorities for campus – Spring 2023

Well-Being Benefits of Outdoor Experiences

- **Reduced Stress**

- Some studies have found that exposure to nature can enhance cognitive performance and support “restoration from mental fatigue.” In addition, time spent on outdoor recreational activities may support reduced production of stress hormones and improved concentration.

- **Improved Mood**

- Both physical activity and being in nature are known to have positive effects on mental health. When compared to exercise indoors, exercising in nature was found to have a positive impact on depression, anger, tension, self-esteem, resilience, and energy levels.

- **Improved Self-Esteem**

- One study showed that exercising in nature can improve self-esteem. Additionally, researchers found that the first five minutes of “green exercise” have the greatest impact on both mood and self-esteem. Other studies reported outdoor sports to increase self-efficacy and improve self-concept.

- **Improved Physical Health**

- Outdoor activities have been linked to increased fitness and cardiovascular functioning, reduced obesity, reduced blood pressure, and reduced risk in diseases such as type 2 diabetes and cancer. Subjectively, outdoor activity and sports are associated with a better overall perception of health and increased quality of life.

- **Strengthened Social Connections**

- Outdoor activity and sports can help people connect with the communities they live in and with one another. It can help foster social connectedness and a stronger community identity.



Current Status on Green Space on Campus

- A lot of ideas, consultant work and some master planning sketches on possibilities but lack of funding/priority to execute.
- Underutilized engagement with the river. Perceived safety concerns.
- Perception that we don't have adequate green space on campus.
- Adequate green space on campus strategically located on both sides of the river that runs through the middle of campus.
- Perception that nobody wants to recreate outdoors during the colder months.
- Pointed effort at designing green space into new facility projects.



Agile Landscapes


- Movable Seating and movable shade (people are most comfortable when they can customize their seating and thus their conversation)
- Space can allow for community, comfort and familiarity when it is customizable
- Balancing cost, function and comfort (what good is a low maintenance space if no one will use it, we need to do a better job of balancing these competing objectives better). When can we stretch ourselves to privilege function over maintenance cost? Not every time, but sometimes





→ Lines of Desire (understand how people prefer to move through a space and design the space to accommodate that desire)

→ Bounded Spaces (vertical height and appropriate landscaping can provide a sense of depth and boundary within a space. How do we balance maintenance cost with environmental richness?)

- 
- Mental Escape (small changes in design can create a sense of enclosure and public privacy)
 - Where can we build public privacy and retreat into landscapes?
 - Perceived Landscape
Permeability and boundary We should seek balance between open space and intimacy in our landscape aesthetic

→ Multifunctional design (can a berm also be a comfortable place?) How can we use landscape dimensions and materials to create unexpected community and pauses inside the landscape

→ Warmer Materials (When can we compromise on concrete? The lifecycle of wood may be shorter than concrete but it's human accessibility is much higher. What are we trying to accomplish? Where can we compromise?)





Quick Wins / Coming Soon

Built and Natural Environment

Lagoon Shelter House

- Built in 1939 and received makeover after the flood of 2008. General Education Fund supported.
- RS used to manage over 30 years ago as their canoe house.
- Last 10+ years has been managed by Iowa Memorial Union for sporadic rental opportunities.
- RS started providing oversight and management of site again in September 2022.
- Working with a couple academic units to provide classroom space inside LSH.
- Goal is to create an indoor/outdoor space to enhance green space usage



Expand Wellness & Edible Landscapes Corridors



Develop University Standards for Biophilic Design



Place

Restoring a healthy interrelationship with nature.



Water

Creating developments that operate within the water balance of a given place and climate.



Energy

Relying only on current solar income.



Health + Happiness

Creating environments that optimize physical and psychological health and well being.



Materials

Endorsing products that are safe for all species through time.



Equity

Supporting a just and equitable world.



Beauty

Celebrating design that uplifts the human spirit.

IOWA

View >> Header and Footer >> Add Unit Name



Natural Landscapes for Wellness and Meditation

Smokeless Firepit and Seating Area

- We want to create a smokeless firepit and seating area for social space and to enhance the outdoor vibe.
<https://breeo.co/products/x-series-30-firemaster-bundle>
- It would only be used during programmable time to where fire will be supervised.
- Firepit will be locked up while not in use.
- Would add more units as demand dictates.
- Programming could take place on campfire recipes...
- Timeline: Spring 2023
- Estimate Cost: ~\$20,000 (Firepit Bundle \$2,500, Stamped Concrete Pad \$17,500)
- Funded By: Recreational Services and Landscape Services



Slack Lining Area

- Popular on campus but students are using trees that can potentially cause damage and risk management concerns.
- Create a designated area using posts designed for slacklining.
- 3 post triangle design to allow for different slacklining lengths (short 50', medium 75', long 100')
- Timeline: Spring 2023
- Cost: ~\$2,400 (3 posts)
- Funded By: Recreational Services



Hammock Stations

- Hammocking is also popular on campus, and we want to create this similar vibe along the river.
- Kammock stations are large multi-level, multi-hammock units that create a social hub.
- Will also have multiple single hammock stations by installing posts designed specifically for hammocking.
- Landscape Services will be installed multiple hammock stations in Spring 2023.
- Timeline: Spring 2023
- Estimated Cost: ~\$8,000 for hammock posts(10) and \$8,000 for Kammock Weaver station = \$16,000
- Funded By: Landscape Services





Low Cost/High Impact

Built and Natural Environment

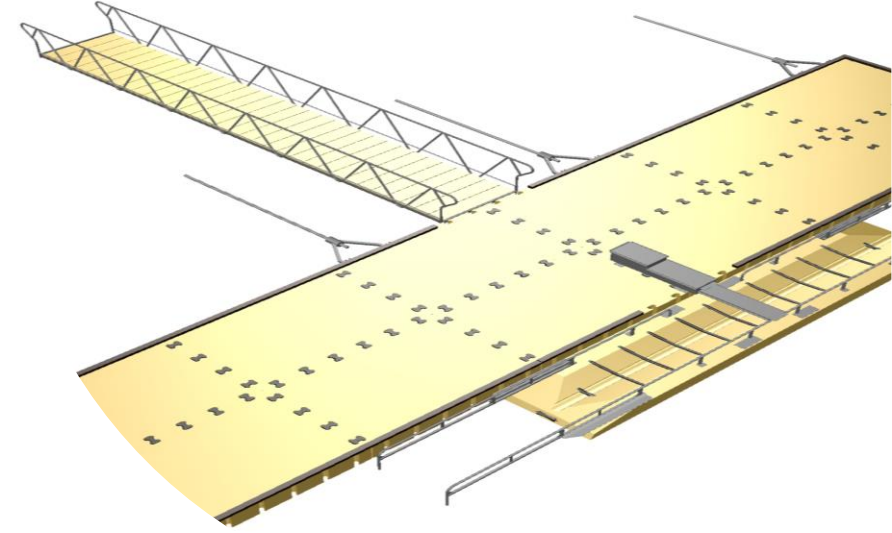
High Cost/High Impact

Built and Natural Environment



River Access Ramp and Dock

- ADA access from river walk to river with sidewalk, ramp and large floating dock.
- Dock includes ADA accessible kayak/canoe launch.
- Dock large enough for classes (12-15 students).
- Water sampling, dusk/dawn yoga classes.
- Timeline: 3–5-year plan
- Estimated cost = \$100,000
- Funding Options: Unknown.



Outdoor Music

- <https://www.percussionplay.com/sectors/parks-and-trails/>
- <https://www.percussionplay.com/septet-ensemble/>
- Research on the benefits of music for mental health.
- Makes musical instruments inclusive and accessible to all.
- Locate along river behind Hancher Auditorium
- Timeline: 3–5-year plan
- Estimated Cost: \$32,000 - \$38,000.
- Funding Options: Unknown.



Mindfulness Garden(s)

- Students have been asking for areas in nature for mindfulness, meditation, yoga.
- Could be used for drop-in uses, small group counseling sessions and programmed mind/body classes.
- Could use multiple on campus of varying sizes on both sides of the river.
- Timeline: Unknown
- Cost: Unknown
- Funding Options: Unknown.



Fitness Playground, Obstacle Course

- Outdoor fitness options are lacking on campus.
- Research shows the benefits of exercising in the outdoors.
- Types for different levels/abilities.
- Would be great to have one on each side of the river.
- Would provide a free fitness option on campus making fitness more accessible and inclusive.
- Timeline: 3-5 years
- Cost: ~\$150K-\$200K
- Funding Options: Unknown. Shared due to it serving both students and staff. Donor funded options.

