5.1 CAMPUS AND URBAN ANALYSIS

UWM’s Kenwood campus occupies 92 contiguous acres that are located approximately three miles north of Milwaukee’s downtown, and centered between Lake Michigan and the Milwaukee River. The compact campus land forms an "L" configuration composed of three super-blocks, bounded by Kenwood Boulevard to the south, Downer Avenue to the east, Cramer Street to the west and Edgewood Avenue to the north.

UWM Kenwood Campus Physical Analysis

Development History [figure 5-2]

The physical organization of UWM’s current campus has evolved over a century of growth and expansion. UWM facilities today include buildings that were originally constructed for use by a women’s college, a seminary, a private high school, and a state teachers’ college and its campus training school; they have been inherited by UWM. Development of the site commenced in the 1900s at the Hartford Street and Downer Street intersection. Several of these historic buildings remain today, including Pearse Hall, Molton Hall, and Merrill Hall. Building construction was largely focused along this eastern edge of the campus until the 1950s when the UWM Union, Kunkel Center, and Mellencamp Hall were built along Kenwood Boulevard, creating a line along the campus' current southern boundary that extended to the eastern edge at Cramer Street. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the majority of the University’s remaining buildings were constructed, and the development continued to infill the Kenwood campus’s three quadrants. These large footprint buildings create a much denser, urban feel to the campus than the smaller structures of the 1900s that had begun to establish a more traditional campus setting. Most recently, the athletics Pavilion was constructed in 2001 to expand the Klotsche Center.

Figure Ground [5-3]

UWM’s Kenwood campus is compact and densely developed, particularly in the southern two quadrants. The orientation and layout of campus buildings form internal quads, as well as face outward towards the neighborhood streets. Despite the apparent density of development, the figure ground shows that there are still areas remaining with future development potential.

Landscape Character [figure 5-5] and Topography [figure 5-1]

The landscape character of the Kenwood campus is defined by planting, topography, materials, open spaces, and overall visual quality of the space. The open spaces can be categorized into five types: woods and forest, playing fields, campus quads, campus parks, and front lawns. As a dense, urban campus the campus quads are dominated by hardscape, particularly in the southern two quadrants where paving covers much of the ground plane, and trees and plantings are limited or confined to defined areas or within planters. Site furnishings, including benches and waste receptacles, are of a similar aesthetic quality and material to the campus’s concrete, modern architecture, reflecting the substantial growth of the campus in the 1960s and 1970s. Along the southeast quadrant of the campus, the
buildings are set back from the street, with expansive front lawns that contribute to the visual character of the campus landscape; however, they are not actively used spaces.

Downer Woods, a 19-acre conservation area marks the northern edge of the campus. The Woods provides relief to the predominant hardscape and a more natural landscape environmental character throughout the campus's upper quadrant. Topography throughout this upper quadrant is rolling and the landscape echos the nearby Downer Woods' forested environment with a campus park setting that is informally planted with shade trees and traversed by curving pedestrian paths. Like Downer Woods, these park and woodland areas are also protected from future development. Most on-campus playing fields are located adjacent to Downer Woods, with the exception of Engelman Field, which is sited on a tight location in a condition more suitable to an academic quad.

**Pedestrian Circulation [figure 5-6]**

With Milwaukee's cold climate, pedestrian circulation patterns navigate through both indoor and outdoor paths on the Kenwood campus. The most heavily trafficked areas traverse the quad flanked by the UWM Union and the Golda Meir Library, and surround the entrances to Sandberg Residence Hall.

Although the three superblocks that compose the Kenwood campus are significantly larger than the neighboring residential blocks, UWM's urban campus is still permeable via local streets, and vehicular traffic passes through along Maryland Avenue. This permeability, while increasing connectivity, also results in areas of potential conflict between pedestrian crossings and vehicular thru-traffic. The pedestrian bridge that spans Maryland Avenue near the Kenwood Avenue entrance is an effort to create grade separated alternatives for pedestrians that avoid these conflict zones.

**Vehicular Circulation [figure 5-7]**

See Section 4 for a complete transportation assessment.

**Building Use [figure 5-4]**

The Kenwood campus's compact nature means that building use and program adjacencies are not challenged by distance, as most facilities are located within a ten-minute walk circle. The Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts is the only academic building sited off of the "L" core campus, but it is immediately across Kenwood Boulevard. Classrooms, academic offices, and research spaces are concentrated in the southern portions of the campus, while all on-campus residential uses are located in the northern quadrant, buffered by Downer Woods. Athletic uses are largely concentrated in the northwest corner, but space constraints have resulted in the introduction of a playing field within the academic core. This athletic field has taken the place of a formerly passive open space, which has produced conflicts for circulation, access to adjacent buildings, and use incompatibilities that future planning efforts must consider.
Public Realm [figure 5-8]

The campus’s public realm comprises indoor, outdoor, and hybrid circulation and gathering spaces. This map reflects the intensity and location of campus life. Spaces on campus experience a wide range of intensities of use, with the mostly frequently used public areas focused near the entrances to the Union, the Golda Meir Library, and the Maryland Avenue entrance to the Sandburg Residence Hall.

Student services are mainly located within the UWM Union near the Kenwood Boulevard and Maryland Avenue entrance to the campus. However, the University has also begun to distribute student services in Bolton Hall due to constraints in the Union. Additional student service uses, pertaining to residential needs, are also centered across campus within Sandburg Residence Hall.

Climate [figures 5-9 – 5-10]

Wisconsin’s northern climate experiences severe winter temperatures which creates the imperative that planning consider strategies to mitigate extreme cold conditions. UWM buildings are largely oriented to create more comfortable microclimates in outdoor spaces, but in specific locations their layout and urban design creates wind tunnels that exacerbate the Milwaukee cold. These wind tunnels are most extreme in the east-west corridors along Hartford Avenue and the campus path located along the internal extension of Hampshire Avenue. Similarly, while many of the courtyard conditions formed between buildings are oriented to benefit from solar gain, a number of courtyards suffer from shaded conditions, including the heavily trafficked public spaces outside the Golda Meir Library and the northern edge of the UWM Union.

Site Capacity [figure 5-11]

Measurements of density at UWM signify a compact campus; however, they also indicate that there still remain development opportunities on campus. The primary analytical tool for measuring program density is the floor area ratio (FAR): the ratio of building gross square footage (GSF) to land area. An FAR of 1.0, for example, results from a single story building covering an entire site or by a four-story building covering 25% of the site. The FAR of the Kenwood campus ranges between 1.2 and 1.4. Some of the great research universities have campus core FARs that are much higher than UWM’s, including University of Michigan, with a core FAR of 3.37; Ohio State University, with a core FAR of just under 2.0; and Purdue University, whose core FAR is 1.8.

UWM Campus Neighborhood Context Analysis

Topography & Figure Ground [figure 5-12] and Open Space [figure 5-13]

Milwaukee’s Lake Park and Lake Michigan waterfront are located just five blocks east of the Kenwood campus while the Milwaukee River and
Riverside Park are located four blocks west. These city-wide assets were designed by Frederick Law Olmsted in the 1800s. Both are within a ten-minute walk of campus; yet, there are limited visual or physical landscape connections between the campus and its surrounding environment. Despite such close proximity to these citywide assets, the campus landscape is not well connected to either the river or lakefront.

**Neighborhood Housing [figure 5-14 – 5-15]**

The University is surrounded by intact residential neighborhoods with a combination of single-family and duplex homes, and some apartment buildings. Columbia St. Mary's Hospital is the University's immediate neighbor to the north of Hartford Avenue, and the only other large institutional presence in the primarily residential area. The existing neighborhoods contain mostly single-family housing to the north and east of the campus, with medium density housing around the south periphery of the campus. On the west, high-density housing borders the campus. The homes in the surrounding neighborhoods are stately and a variety of architectural styles lend diversity to the building stock. Many of them are historically relevant, with notable histories including design authorship by Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers, classic examples of the Art Deco period, and original stained glass details.

Water Tower Landmark Trust neighborhood occupies the area east of campus towards the lakefront, and is not a neighborhood that is home to UWM students. Rather, student housing is focused in the neighborhoods to the immediate south and west. To the south, Murray Hill neighborhood is home to a large concentration of student housing, which continues south toward the Kenilworth area. Cambridge Woods to the west houses another concentration of students, with the Milwaukee River acting as the boundary of student housing, and very few students living beyond the River.

**Neighborhood Student Life and Retail Corridors [figure 5-16]**

Neighborhood student life and retail are tied directly to student housing locations. Downer Avenue and Oakland Avenue, which form the eastern and western boundaries of the Murray Hill neighborhood, are prominent retail corridors that serve the students and connect from the campus south to Downtown Milwaukee.

**Access and Gateways [figure 5-17]**

The majority of vehicular traffic to the campus arrives from the south, via the Lincoln Memorial Drive parkway along the lake, Highway 43 to the west, or connecting streets from downtown Milwaukee. Pedestrians also mainly enter from the south and west, where the largest concentrations of student housing are located.