5. REAL ESTATE

The Island is of limited size. It cannot be expanded into the Cayo del Oso for environmental reasons. It cannot be expanded into Corpus Christi Bay for environmental, aesthetic, and traffic reasons.

The University owns the entirety of the island except for a small out tract (perhaps 11 acres) adjacent to the University on the east end of the Island and belonging to private religious organizations. The land area within the limits of the island is sufficient to allow for expansion of academic uses to meet the presently projected enrollment of the University. However, it is doubtful whether the land area is sufficient for expansion of parking at the present student enrollment to parking ratio. Certainly, this is true if no parking structures (four levels tall or perhaps taller) are constructed on the Island. Otherwise off-island parking on the mainland across the bridge or elsewhere will have to be built.

A set of function filters should be used to analyze the uses that should remain on or be established on the island and those that shouldn't.

- FUNCTIONS TO REMAIN ON THE ISLAND
  - Academic functions
  - Research functions
  - Student life functions
  - Administrative functions
  - Facilities management
  - Parking

- FUNCTIONS TO REMAIN ON THE ISLAND ON AN INTERIM BASIS
  - Student housing
  - Student recreational space

- FUNCTIONS TO BE LOCATED ON OR MOVED TO THE IMMEDIATE MAINLAND
  - Student housing
  - Student recreational space
  - Commercial support
  - Large scale parking
  - Athletics
  - Storage

- FUNCTIONS TO BE LOCATED REGIONALLY
  - Academic functions such as certain professional schools
  - Research functions requiring large areas or marine access
  - Related student housing
  - Related parking

THE ISLAND SMALL OUT TRACT

At some point in the future it may be advantageous for the University to acquire the small (approximately 11 acres) parcel on the east end of the Island. However, the Campus Master Plan Update 2006 should not depend on this eventuality in any way.
Illustration No. 5.1 OWNERSHIP OF THE ISLAND

Presently, the two religious institutions on the out track are using their facilities as initial student centers. As the University grows, these two centers may need to be expanded or replaced. This would make acquisition by the University less desirable.

THE MAINLAND ADJACENT AND ACROSS THE BRIDGE

EAST: THE NAVAL AIR STATION

In the far distant future the possibility of a closing of or reduction of the Naval Air Station and Army dock facilities to the east of the Island might be of great importance to the University. The process for such closing or changing the use of bases is referred to as BRAC, the Base Realignment and Closure. The concept of a marine science and oceanography complex with marina and field operations launching facilities on Corpus Christi Bay side of Air Station site is a powerful one. However, the campus plan cannot in any way depend on this eventuality.

WEST: LAND OWNED BY THE CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI

Discussions concerning the potential conversion of the nearby land owned by the City of Corpus Christi to University use are in progress. Refer to Illustration No. 5.2. Preliminary concepts envision the same functions mentioned above for location on the mainland being assigned to the site. Additionally, some twenty percent of the tract is encumbered by flood plain designation, making it useful as a park and as an extension of the natural area concept of the City’s adjacent Hans Suter Wildlife Area.
Illustration 5.2 POTENTIAL SITES ON MAINLAND

THE CITY OF CORPUS CHRISTI LIMITS
There are numerous tracts of significant size along Ennis Joslin Road, both developed and undeveloped. On the south side of the S.P.I.D. at the Ennis Joslin intersection, there is a large amount of undeveloped land available. Within in some determinable limit once someone parks and enters a shuttle bus it doesn’t matter how far the lot is from the destination.

The City’s nature preserve on the edge of the Cayo del Oso across Ennis Joslin Road from the sports complex and water treatment facility is an important asset. In conjunction with the City the possible unofficial but functional annexation of this facility into the potential coastal research area of the University is an important way to expand the University’s area available for its mission.

ELSEWHERE IN THE METROPOLITAN AREA
DOWNTOWN
The economic development potential of off-island University locations is viewed by the City as being strong. Refer to Illustration No. 5.3.

NORTH BAY
The possibility of a separate specialized campus for marine sciences and oceanography and a related marina and facilities for field operations launching at the recently closed (Base Realignment and Closure or “BRAC” procedures) federal naval port facilities at Ingleside may be an important opportunity.
A NOVEL CONCEPT

Under state law the University may not spend state funds on parking facilities. It may, however, acquire land with state funds and build parking facilities on it with its own local funds. Since the University is on a small island its campus cannot be physically expanded horizontally by acquisition, perhaps the island can be expanded vertically. Could the construction of parking garages be granted the status of acquisition of land? The total cost of acquiring land across the bridge somewhere and developing it and linking it with a shuttle bus system adequate to the task is very large. The thoroughfares and the bridge are adequate for at least 2,000 structured parking spaces on the Island. Refer to section 7, TRANSPORTATION. The appropriate area of land per space is approximately 325 square feet. Therefore, such a garage project would be equivalent to adding some eleven acres of land to the Island — a nearly six percent increase. The buildable area of the Island would be increased by this amount if an equivalent number of surface spaces were removed.

A University based funding mechanism for constructing garages could utilize a unitary parking fee with all permits (not just garage permits) sharing in the cost of the garages. Mixed use leases on the ground floor such as book store, cafes, miscellaneous shops, coffee shops, and even classrooms and offices (turn around and expansion space) could help fund the garages.

In special situations such as the Island University the parking garage can be an academic and support building that is part of the architectural and urban design vocabulary of the campus.

SUMMARY

The wise use of limited land area is always a critical issue for an institution of higher education— even more so in an urban setting. But the importance of real estate planning for a major urban university located on a small island makes it of extraordinary importance.
**Recommendations:**

1. Build densely on the Island to conserve the limited area.
2. Acquire out tract on east end of Island when possible.
3. Acquire large tract(s) of land on the west mainland that are located as closely to the Island as possible.
4. Remain aware of any possibility of the closing of the Naval Air Station on the east mainland and of its possible availability.
5. Remain aware of any possibility of the acquisition of the Ingleside Naval Shipyard due to BRAC procedures.
6. Seek state funding of parking garages on the Island as a strategic concept for acquiring additional land area on the Island.