

# UW TACOMA STATION

The rail corridor in itself, defines the urban form of downtown Tacoma.  
The tracks and all of its components are historic artifacts, part of an industrial landscape to be celebrated as an important element within the new landscape design.

a revived campus heart  
a reactivated city spine  
a campus quad for the 21st century

## PLACES

- P1 Stormwater Plaza
- P2 Tree Grove / Small Gathering
- P3 Lawn Panel
- P4 Events Plaza
- P5 Wetland Basin

## CIRCULATION

- C1 Prairie Line Trail
- C2 Crossing "Stitch" Path
- C3 Upper Walk & Overlook

## ELEMENTS

- E1 Signage/ Interpretation
- E2 Wood Retaining Wall
- E3 Railroad Tracks & Ties
- E4 Custom Seating
- E5 Projection Screen
- E6 Trellis/ Rain Canopy
- E7 Art/ Memorial



The schematic design plan is to be implemented in multiple phases



View from the Prairie Line Trail near a stormwater plaza, a crossing "stitch", tree grove & wetland cleansing basin.



A tree grove with picnic tables allows for small gatherings and study. A custom linear bench edges the lawn.



A wood clad upper walkway at Tioga, overlooking an expanded plaza & dynamic stormwater feature.



Lawns are designed as flexible spaces, this one outside of the Tioga library hosts an evening event.



Existing rail tracks flow seamlessly through wetland cleansing basins, small seating areas & plazas.

## BACKGROUND

The University of Washington Tacoma Campus is steeped in industrial heritage. The Northern Pacific Railroad's "Prairie Line" (chartered by Abraham Lincoln and completed in 1873), connected the Midwest to Puget Sound. With Tacoma as the Pacific terminus, the first passenger depot was located at the UW Tacoma site.

Initially fronted by cabins, rooms for rent, as well as coal and wood bunkers to fuel steam engines, an 80 foot wide rail corridor was established through downtown. In time, a constantly changing web of rail spurs, sidings, loading docks, and freight yards serving factories and warehouses, gave form to the district.



## CONCEPTS

### CONNECTING

Along with developing an essential open space for the UW Tacoma campus, the UW Tacoma Station will function as an important open space for the City of Tacoma, especially for the neighborhoods that the Prairie Line will connect.



The Prairie Line is a recreational bike and pedestrian facility proposed by the City of Tacoma, ultimately connecting Commencement Bay to the Brewery District neighborhood to the south of campus. The UW Tacoma Station will be the first built segment of this trail.

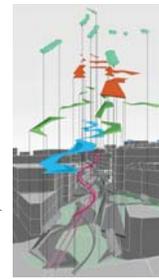
### STITCHING

In 1873, a continuous thread of Northern Pacific's steel, stitched 1700 miles of changing urban and natural landscapes together. In similar fashion the UW Tacoma Station will re-stitch the campus and its neighbor's together, promoting better connectivity and a stronger identity of the campus environment.



### LAYERING

A layered landscape has been developed where design components such as the pedestrian/ bike trail (The Prairie Line) wetland basins, lawn panels, plazas and tree groves are carefully placed within the campus framework of buildings, supporting the programmatic goals of the University. Encouraging students, faculty and neighbors to use the campus open space in a variety of ways.



## INTERPRETING

Remnants of Tacoma's industrial roots remain, including the rails, ties, ballast, loading docks, electrical sheds, and switch bucks. These remnants are interpreted subtly, as part of the site design, to expose fragments of a gritty past.

## CLEANSING

In partnership with the City of Tacoma, the University section of the Prairie Line will harvest runoff from a greater urban watershed (65 acres), treat it through the landscape, and return clean water to the existing infrastructure flowing into Commencement Bay. This model will be repeated for different sections of the Prairie Line, reducing pollutants entering Puget Sound.



## COMPONENTS

A dynamic, modular framework has been laid out that has the flexibility to change along with the UW Tacoma goals through time. Lawn panels and plantings can be replaced with plaza and gathering areas as the campus demand for open spaces increases along with its growth in population. The spaces are comprised of a repeating set of components:



- a Upper docks and walkways access the ground floor of buildings, allowing for movement of students to the open space. Sheet pile walls, reminiscent of railroad structures, frame the space and allow grade transition.
- b Wetland basins fill with water during storm events, collected water is slowly cleansed via bio-filtration before being released back to the City's storm system.
- c The gentle curve and slope of the railroad tracks and ties is respected and will remain in place.
- d Groves of trees signify a crossing point, allowing for easy and frequent campus connections. This "stitch" is comprised of connecting paths, decomposed granite paving, with seating elements for student gathering.
- e A continuous fifteen foot wide paved segment of the Prairie Line Trail runs along the east side of the corridor.
- f Stormwater plazas, activated during storm events, have been designed to double as useable space in the dry season.
- g With a nod toward a traditional campus "quad", a series of lawn panels populate the space. Lawns are edged with a custom linear seating element that "folds" to allow for an all season range of lounging/ resting/ working opportunities.

## NAME

**THE PRAIRIE LINE**  
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON  
TACOMA STATION

LOCATION  
**TACOMA, WA**

CLIENT  
**UW TACOMA**

DESIGN TEAM  
**PLACE STUDIO**  
SRG PARTNERSHIP, SEATTLE  
KPFF CONSULTING ENGINEERS, TACOMA  
UW OFFICE OF PLANNING & BUDGETING  
UW CAPITAL PROJECTS OFFICE

DATE  
**10/2011 - ONGOING**