I. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

UC SAN DIEGO Housing, Dining & Hospitality (HDH) is requesting site endorsement for a new design-build housing project for single graduate students. The project would redevelop the West Mesa Apartments in the Mesa Housing Neighborhood on East Campus (Figure 1), and construct a shared-use parking structure on existing surface lot P738 on the Science Research Park (SRP) (Figure 1). The project is needed to meet the 2004 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) goal of housing 50 percent of eligible students and to accommodate projected increases in graduate and professional students. In addition, current demand for housing substantially exceeds the available supply as there were over 2,000 graduate students on the wait list as of Fall 2015. Furthermore, on January 20, 2016 University of California President Janet Napolitano announced “a housing initiative aimed at supporting current students and future enrollment growth across the UC system.” Each UC campus is expected “to expand the pool of student housing over the next four years, and to accelerate the timetable for completing student housing developments that are already in the planning phase” (http://ucop.edu/student-housing-initiative).

A Building Advisory Committee (BAC) has been assembled to oversee the development of a Detailed Project Program (DPP) and provide guidance during the project design.

II. PROJECT PROGRAM

The project would construct approximately 500,000 GSF of new building space providing 800 to 1,000 beds for single graduate students. The amenity program is currently being developed with assistance from the BAC and would include common spaces such as staff offices with support, meeting rooms, study areas, laundry facilities, mail boxes, lounges, computer access areas, a fitness center, retail space, and/or other spaces students may express interest in having. Exterior amenities could include outdoor swimming pool, sport courts, fixed barbeque grills and/or other spaces. The parking structure is anticipated to provide approximately 1,200 parking spaces to be split evenly between HDH and UC San Diego Health System La Jolla. Two separate projects are beginning the planning phase and are expected to be designed in coordination with this project: a pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the canyon connecting Mesa to the future Gilman Bridge and a road connection between Miramar Street and Athena Circle to allow vehicle traffic to and from the Mesa Neighborhood to remain on internal campus roadways. Regents Road, a high traffic volume City-owned street, is currently the only way to access Mesa.
III. PROJECT SITE

The project site is approximately 12 acres to accommodate the new housing buildings, the parking structure, some surface parking, any road improvements along and between the parking structure and the new housing, and the potential relocation of a 25 space parking lot utilized by the Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC). The site was identified as the most appropriate site in the 2016 Mesa Housing Neighborhood Planning Study because of its potential to activate One Miramar Street Apartments, connect it to the Mesa Nueva project, and complete the new “village” concept. Ease of utility connections, limited community impacts, and adjacency to the shared parking structure were additional considerations.

The new housing buildings would displace all of West Mesa Apartments which consists of six two-story buildings with eight two-bedroom apartments each (48 units/96 beds), one laundry/community building, and 126 surface parking spaces. Twenty five of the surface parking spaces have been allocated to ECEC and would need to be replaced adjacent to ECEC if displaced. A fairly flat site directly east of ECEC has been identified for this purpose. The new parking structure would displace 142 spaces in SRP lot P738, which is currently used by the Health System for staff parking, and it is likely that Athena Circle would need to be modified to allow access into the structure.

The project site contains an approximately 15 foot elevation change, which may provide some opportunity for surface parking to be tucked under buildings on the south side. Miramar Street is approximately 20 feet higher than the P738 on the parking structure, which provides the opportunity to provide access for HDH residents at grade from Miramar Street and access for the Health System users at grade from Athena Circle.

An area north of Miramar Road, west of the Parking Structure site, has been identified for potential construction staging and would be restored with landscape as part of the project.

IV. PLANNING PARAMETERS

Relationship to 2004 Long Range Development Plan (LRDP)

The proposed project is in conformance with the 2004 LRDP. It would help achieve the LRDP goal to provide housing for 50 percent of eligible students and the site is designated for “Housing” land use. The parking structure site is located in the SRP but on a site that has been set aside for parking use in the SRP development plan.
Relationship to 1989 UC San Diego Master Plan Study (MPS)

The proposed site is located in East Campus Mesa Housing, which is defined as a distinct Neighborhood in the Master Plan Study (MPS). The “Neighborhood” is one of the five MPS planning principles that guide the physical development of campus and is defined as the “building block” of campus, “a place with common academic or other campus functions” that “should be made up of related buildings and open spaces within a defined area with clear boundaries.” The Nueva West project would be another step in the transformation of the Mesa Housing into a denser, mixed use community, per the Mesa Housing NPS.

“The Park”, which consists of the Ecological Reserve, Grove Reserve, and Restoration Lands, is another relevant MPS principle. The MPS states that “the Park is intended as a resource and an amenity...the overall intention is to make it accessible for human use, and to provide the neighborhoods with “breathing space” and the presence of nature. An exception is the designated canyons and hillsides where human intervention or use will disrupt a fragile ecology”. The project site is located along the Ecological Reserve which includes sensitive habitat and protected wetlands. No impacts would be permitted and any development is subject to a 50 foot setback from the wetlands, therefore the Parking Structure, in particular, will need to designed and constructed carefully so as to avoid such impacts.

“Connections” are the third MPS principle relevant to this project, defined as an integrated system or roads, paths, public entries, landmarks, view corridors, and landscape features that tie the campus together in a manner compatible with the distinct atmospheres of the neighborhoods. The Mesa Housing Neighborhood is fairly disconnected and the only one with no direct access to the Campus Loop Road. Existing pedestrian and bicycle connections to the rest of campus are circuitous and inconvenient. There project should seek to create better connections for all modes of travel in addition to coordinating design and construction of the concurrent bike/ped bridge and Athena Circle connection projects.

Relationship to 2016 Mesa Housing Neighborhood Planning Study (MHNPS)

The Mesa Housing Neighborhood Planning Study (MHNPS) will be presented to the Campus/Community Planning Committee this month for approval and provides design guidelines for the Mesa Nueva project. The MHNPS “outlines the potential to transform an existing lower density neighborhood surrounded by
residual open space into a mixed-use community organized as a collection of villages framing a central park. Building on the tradition seen across the UC San Diego campus, the open space serves as a primary organizing element for the framework. Within the site’s 86 acres, this strategy creates a plan that can accommodate higher densities while also increasing the district’s usable open space area.” The plan provides specific design guidelines for each “Village” planned around the central park, or “Arboleda” and includes open space and circulation guidelines. Nueva West is envisioned to complete “Village 1” which includes OMS Apartments. Per the Mesa NPS, “an expanded village center will bring the two developments together around one central area of community amenities and shuttle stop. Nueva West will form the primary pedestrian gateway to the entire Mesa Neighborhood from the west. The pedestrian bridge will link the east and west campus together and enter the development in an area filled with ground floor active uses.” Below is a summarization of the key elements of the plan that pertain to the Nueva West Graduate Student Housing project.

**Building Form & Massing**
To meet the project housing capacity targets it is anticipated that buildings of varying heights up to 15-stories would be necessary. Key considerations from the MHNPS include the following:

- Vary building heights to create interest and mitigate density. Taller buildings should be sited to minimize shading in courtyards and lower buildings.
- Create active ground floor uses
- Clearly define outdoor rooms that link together through a larger open space network
- Create an active gateway linking to the pedestrian and bicycle bridge
- Locate active uses at key pedestrian crossings and special uses at key connections
- Integrate community spaces at many levels, including rooftops
- Create an engaging street wall on Miramar with a 10’-20’ building setback that includes a pedestrian zone and bicycle path.
- Consider below grade parking accessed from the south, taking advantage of the grade change.

**Circulation & Parking**
Vehicular access will be from Miramar Street, the northern portion of a two-lane loop road that extends from the Regents Road/Executive Drive intersection to the Regents Road/Regents
Park Row intersection. The MHNPS envisions widening and improvements to Miramar Street where possible to include on-street parking, two travel lanes and a turn lane, and bicycle and pedestrian pathways. The Nueva West site may not allow improvements to this degree due to the constrained site area therefore the design will need to analyze the most appropriate design for Miramar with a priority on bicycle and pedestrian safety. Special attention should be paid to the pedestrian crossing between OMS and Nueva West, and the bicycle/pedestrian bridge point of connection at Miramar Street.

One of the primary focuses of the MHNPS is the creation of a walkable community. The pedestrian network links not only each village to each other, but also the Mesa Neighborhood to the larger campus, surrounding community and future transit connections. The pedestrian network should be intuitive for users reducing the need for unnecessary wayfinding signs.

To meet parking requirements the project includes a stand-alone parking structure, while underground parking integrated under the housing that work with the site’s topography, on-street parking and some limited surface parking spaces would also be considered to provide proximate parking for residents.

Open Space Guidelines
Integral to the redevelopment of the Mesa Neighborhood is the open space and landscape design. Each Village is envisioned to provide “Courtyards” for larger social interactions, “Commons” for active spaces adjacent to pedestrian pathways, “Patios” for more intimate gatherings, and “Terraces” for more private gatherings on upper levels of buildings. In addition, bringing the landscape of the canyons into the center of the site through a series of “Rustic Corridors” engages the entire neighborhood with the unique qualities of the Mesa landscape while also serving stormwater management needs for the community. A “Rustic Corridor” is envisioned between Nueva West and Mesa Nueva (currently under construction) to serve many functions: pedestrian and bicycle link, fire lane, and a vegetated buffer. The MHNPS provides a suggested plant palette for each open space typology.

V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS
The proposed project would be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) would be required. Anticipated environmental issues to be studied include visual quality, biology, noise, traffic, cultural resources, air quality, hydrology and water quality, and infrastructure services.
**Sustainability**

The University of California has created the Policy on Sustainable Practices oriented toward energy efficient and “green building” standards established by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The project will seek to achieve Leadership in Energy Efficient Design (LEED) Silver rating by the USGBC.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

The site evaluation will be presented for information and potential action at the February 25, 2016 meeting. The BAC will provide oversight on the development of the DPP, which will be provided to three short listed design build teams. A UC San Diego Selection Committee consisting of staff, BAC members, and DRB members will conduct a series of workshops with the short listed teams. C/CPC will have the opportunity to comment on the Schematic Design before the project moves into Design Development.
Nueva West Graduate Student Housing

physical and community planning
created on 02/18/16

FIGURE 1