6 The Neighborhood Plan Concept

6.1 Planning Philosophy
Three fundamental principles intrinsic to the UCSD Campus environment are united to form the philosophy of the ECHS Plan concept:

- Strengthen the Neighborhood identity to create a visually richer "sense of place;"
- Integrate the rustic landscape to balance and ground the "place" in its canyon-mesa context;
- Provide the Neighborhood with a sense of unity by reinforcing the pedestrian experience.

The mesa and canyon landforms that give the ECHS Neighborhood its unique spatial and physical location must inform and shape the built environment. These elements become an integral part of the open space system of the Neighborhood through their connection with a strong pedestrian network that provides linkages to the adjacent East Campus neighborhoods.

6.2 The Plan Concept
The concept of the ECHS Neighborhood Plan is the expansion of an existing minor neighborhood pathway into the Health Sciences Walk (Walk), a major east-west promenade that links each zone of the Neighborhood.

The Walk is a backbone of activity, orientation, and an important connection to the canyons beyond the mesa's edge through the North and South Canyons, and significant open spaces, pathways, and courts.

Figure 6.1 shows the Neighborhood Plan Concept.
6.3 Planning Principles

The three fundamental planning principles united to form the Neighborhood concept can be expanded to a set of key elements that define and reinforce the concept, and form the basis for the design guidelines:

- **Establish a Site Identity**
  The site identity is generated by a visual and spatial experience rooted in the physical location, and informed by the environmental elements of the site and its relationship to the built form. The merging of building and place must always refer to the canyon landscape, and be visually and physically linked to the Health Sciences Walk network.
Diversity in form and space can promote strong identity through the juxtaposition of scale in building elements along the Walk, promoting nodes, landmarks, and destination points like the Thornton Hospital entry, the Cancer Center Plaza, and the Gilman Bridge overlook.

- **Establish the Pedestrian Network**
  The Health Sciences Walk forms the primary pedestrian element on the site. Secondary north-south pathways or corridors begin at the Walk's backbone to destinations that include building entries, canyon vista overlooks, parking, the LRT Station, and offsite destinations. The network must also have a strong hierarchy of scale, orientation, landscape and hardscape treatment. Figure 6.2 shows the Pedestrian Network.

- **Preserve the Site Topography**
  The canyon edge slopes strongly define the mesa on which the built form of the Neighborhood is placed. The topography of these edges should remain unchanged to enhance the vistas from the top of the mesa, maintain the separation of the rustic and the discrete landscapes, as well as promote the contrast of the North and South canyons intervention into the mesa's land form.

The North and South Canyon topography should be exaggerated in a V-shaped contour to the extent possible.

- **Establish a Hierarchy of Open Space**
  The Neighborhood open space hierarchy should place the North and South Canyon elements as the primary open space. Secondary open space includes more urban plazas such as the Transit Plaza, the Medical Center, and Campus Point Plaza, and the South Canyon overlook. Tertiary open spaces would be categorized as building courts and entries. Figure 6.3 illustrates the open space hierarchy.
• **Promote Responsive Built Form**
  The form, massing, composition, and plan organization of Neighborhood buildings must sensitively respond to the topographic uniqueness of the mesa and canyons, the organization of the Health Sciences Walk and pedestrian network, rustic canyon landscape elements, and the orientation and climate of all other open space elements on the site. Devices such as colonnades and arcades should be utilized to reinforce the transition to the Walk from important interior spaces, and to form a vocabulary of spaces along the Walk system.

• **Refine the Roadway Loop**
  The existing Medical Center Drive road forms a loop on the site, but the loop weakens and loses its organizational clarity on the north side of the Neighborhood. It is also focused solely on the Hospital entry. The roadway system should be revised to incorporate more development site areas into the “inside” of the loop, allowing pedestrian circulation without crossing roadways, except at major entry points into the Neighborhood. These entries should reinforce pedestrian movement, and control vehicle movement. The loop road should be vertically separated from the pedestrian crossings in the Transit Plaza.

The roadway scale should be downgraded with a generous landscaped median, and split at the North and South Canyon crossings to reduce the visual encroachment into the rustic landscape. Figure 6.4 illustrates refining the roadway loop.
6.4 The Concept Description

The ECHS Neighborhood is organized along the Health Sciences Walk East and West, a landscaped pedestrian network traversing the entire 0.4 mile east-west length of the neighborhood. The Walk connects the Gilman Bridge, Transit Plaza, and Medical Center building entries with the eastern destinations that include the Cancer Center, the East Parking Structure, Shiley and Ratner Centers, and in the future, Regents Road. The Walks are also intersected by secondary north-south pathways to destinations at building entries, parking, and canyon overlooks.

The Walk system is intersected at important points by elements of the open space network, including the North and South Canyons, Transit Plaza, Medical Center Plaza, and Campus Point Plaza.

Neighborhood Zones are organized by location, proposed facility use, and open space boundaries.

Within each Neighborhood zone, building sites and open space elements are composed as integrated compositions that include the open space network and the Health Science Walk pedestrian networks.
7 DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES