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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction

The University Center / Sixth College Neighborhoods Planning Study is intended to guide development of the core of the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) campus. The study addresses significant changes that have occurred or are planned for the two neighborhoods since completion of the previous study in 1992—an increase in the development program for new buildings to 1.1 times the 1992 study level, the location of a permanent home for Sixth College, and the introduction of Light Rail Transit (LRT) rail lines and a station in Pepper Canyon. Note that two neighborhoods are addressed in this document.

The study builds on the concepts outlined in the 1989 UCSD Master Plan Study, the 1989 University Center Design Guidelines, and the 1992 University Center/Fifth College Neighborhoods Planning Study and Design Guidelines, which together establish and confirm University Center as the urban core and heart of the campus. Developing University Center as a vital mixed-use downtown neighborhood connected to Sixth College was the starting point of this study. A Planning Advisory Committee (PAC)—representing the full range of campus groups who use, reside, and have a stake in this important area of campus—guided the planning process.
B. Vision and Principles

University Center and Sixth College are envisioned as a community in which living and learning are overlapping experiences, shaped by interactions among people and places. These neighborhoods are imagined as analogous to a city downtown—a central place of day—and nighttime activity. Here, the university’s central services are sited compactly along with public amenities (such as Town Square and Pepper Bowl), with access to public transit and linked by a network of pedestrian-oriented walks, streets, plazas, courtyards, and public spaces. The idea is to promote a landscape of social exchange while enabling people to fulfill a variety of needs.

The following principles are based on the goals and objectives set by the Planning Advisory Committee. (See Appendix A.) The principles of the University Center / Sixth College Neighborhoods Planning Study are to:

I. Strengthen the neighborhoods as the campus crossroads and center of campus life through development that meets the growing need for on-campus retail, housing, academic expansion, and entertainment.

II. Provide well-defined access points to the neighborhoods via transit, shuttle buses, and private vehicles, with clear links to the Central Pedestrian Core.

III. Create an attractive and comfortable “walkable” environment that brings people and activity together.

IV. Optimize development sites with the appropriate density and development guidelines to generate activity and create compact, pedestrian-scale urban neighborhoods.

V. Integrate Pepper Canyon into the daily life of the neighborhoods.

VI. Make the neighborhoods a model of sustainable development.

C. Key Recommendations

The development plan and design standards and guidelines for the University Center and Sixth College Neighborhoods are described in detail in later chapters of this report. The following are key recommendations of the plan—the big gestures that contribute to the vision and constitute the major enhancements to the neighborhoods and campus. See Figure 2. The plan will:

1. Extend the Central Pedestrian Core of campus from Library Walk to Sixth College and the future Light Rail Transit station, between Rupertus Way and Lyman Lane.

Located within the core are the neighborhoods’ key open spaces. The progression west to east is Library Walk, Town Square, Lyman Lane, Matthews Quad, Russell Lane, Pepper Bowl amphitheater, Station Square and the LRT station, Sixth College Hub, and Warren Field. Extending and defining the core creates a stronger center to the campus overall and knits together the two neighborhoods.

Lyman Lane is the “main street” pedestrian corridor through the two neighborhoods. It will be further distinguished by the development of active social and academic destinations, street trees, and improvements to the open spaces. Rupertus is another key pedestrian link between University Center and Sixth College. It is dependent upon development across Pepper Canyon to connect the two neighborhoods.

2. Join Sixth College and University Center via development sites that bridge the east and west sides of Pepper Canyon.

New academic uses such as a professional school or the new performance center—which is programmatically linked to the culture, art, and technology curriculum of Sixth College and to University Center as the campus cultural hub—will serve as a bridge across Pepper Canyon,
connecting Sixth College and the LRT with University Center. The intent is to have additional outdoor seating for the performance center step down into the canyon, and the building's northern facade open onto the Pepper Bowl amphitheater.

3. Integrate the Light Rail Transit (LRT) corridor, station, and shuttle bus access into the campus open space system, locating stations at the gateways within walking distance of Price Center and other key destinations.

Located at the center of Sixth College, the LRT...
station will be an important gateway to the university and link with the surrounding city. The design of the station will embody the ideals of culture, art, and technology—reflecting the Sixth College mission—and function as an events station for activities at University Center, Warren Field, Canyonview pools, and Price Center, as well as those outside the neighborhood such as at RIMAC Arena and the Theater District. LRT riders will ascend from the station to Station Square. Queuing space for campus shuttle busses will allow for efficient transfer to the campus transit system from the LRT.

Buildings, circulation, and open spaces are organized to help welcome and orient visitors to the campus, including opening view corridors along Lyman Lane and Rupertus, and establishing quads, courtyards, plazas, and a network of pedestrian passageways.

4 Integrate housing, retail, academic uses, and parking into each neighborhood.

The most vibrant neighborhoods are characterized by a mix of uses, blending recreation, housing, and commercial activities. The plan encourages this mix and offers the university the opportunity to enter into creative development.

5 Concentrate retail uses along the grid of streets and pedestrian paths between Town Square and the gateways.

The central grid of streets and pedestrian paths will contain a mix of pedestrian-scale uses—including dining, entertainment, and services—anchored on the north by the Price Center and Town Square, on the east by the LRT/shuttle bus station, and on the south by the Gilman Transit Hub and Myers Parking Structure.

6 Complete the development program for Sixth College to realize its mission of fostering social and academic experiences within the curriculum of culture, art, and technology.

As enrollment grows, the college will expand onto the mesa east of Pepper Canyon, adding new buildings and outdoor spaces that encourage social interaction and strengthen the college’s identity.

7 Locate the Sixth College provost at the hub of residential life.

The Sixth College Hub building will welcome upper division students and resident freshmen and sophomores to its digital lab and meeting rooms at all hours. With classrooms and offices for the provost and Academic and Student Affairs, it will be the center of the living-learning neighborhood.

8 Create new building sites and usable open space by partially filling Pepper Canyon.

With the introduction of the LRT, the plan recommends partial filling and sculpting of the northern end of the canyon for use as an amphitheater and site for the performance center or academic buildings as a bridge across the canyon. Significant grading of the canyon southeast of the station will allow for a new college open space east of the LRT tracks at the level of the adjacent housing. Relatively flat, it will invite a variety of student uses. The partial filling of Pepper Canyon yields new developable land to accommodate approximately 650,000 GSF of future building program. A new road east of the Gilman Parking Structure will extend from Gilman Drive and Russell Lane for access.
Define Warren Field as an active recreational open space.

With construction of the LRT, new athletic fields will be aligned with the Central Pedestrian Core to replace the existing fields. The athletic fields are an important part of campus activity, hosting daily practice sessions, tournaments, and events. In their new configuration and within improved access and parking, the fields will provide better facilities, and become a strong and visible feature of the campus landscape. Parking may be located under the athletic fields.

Create a physical environment that supports social interaction.

The development of the University Center/Sixth College Neighborhoods as UCSD’s “downtown” presents the campus with the unique opportunity to create a “college town” feeling on campus—to engage students socially in a new sense of community that attracts and encourages interaction among resident students, commuter students, faculty, staff, and visitors; to build on the synergy of various attractions in order to create a critical mass of people in the University Center area; to offer convenient access to needed goods and services; to act as a gateway to the campus, a welcoming center for visitors and a transportation hub accessing other parts of the campus; to establish the downtown as a place to “see and be seen”; to create and renew the University Center/Sixth College Neighborhoods as a lively area both day and night, with an active scene accentuated through frequent events and activities such as art shows, recitals, faculty and staff exhibits, Price Center events, outdoor concerts, farmers markets, alumni reunions, campus tours, and numerous other activities; and finally, to offer visitors to events in the nearby neighborhoods, such as the Theatre District, RIMAC, and Mandeville, a place to be before or after an event.

The primary ingredient needed to activate the downtown concept is people, specifically significant numbers of people engaged with each other and with the area, itself. Achieving this critical mass will require careful planning and placement of retail services, classrooms, housing, and dining establishments—including cafes, coffee shops, bookstores, salons, print shops, and other day/night services that are in high demand—in close proximity to one another so as to create the required people density. This synergy requires a center. And the center of the downtown will necessarily be close to the expanding Price Center and its bordering pedestrian walkways, Lyman Lane, Matthews Quad, and Town Square. Housing for year-around residents in the downtown area will be essential, just as it is in every lively urban community. Such housing in the University Center area would be geared for faculty, post-docs, or graduate students, in addition to the undergraduate housing provided as an integral part of Sixth College.

D. Chapters of the Study

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Chapter 2 introduces the development plan for buildings and defines the framework of open spaces, circulation, and utilities. It concludes with a comparison of building parcel capacity and development program requirements to promote building sites that contribute to the quality of life in the neighborhoods. See Figure 3 Figure: Ground Diagrams

DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Chapter 3: Design Standards and Guidelines is organized in two sections addressing University Center and Sixth College separately. Each section is divided into two parts: 1) buildings and 2) open space, generally conforming to the disciplines of planning, architecture, and landscape architecture, since it is these realms that make up the urban form and function of the campus. The neighborhoods are divided into development parcels to further define site specific opportunities.

Distinction is made between standards and guidelines. Standards are requirements that must be met or recommendations that are firm in principle, but nonspecific in detail. Guidelines, on the other hand, are conceptual in nature, offering a possibility or recommendation that contributes to the desired character of the neighborhoods, but leaving room for the inventive interpretation of talented planners, designers, architects, and landscape architects.

PHASING

Development will be undertaken over time in a series of steps based upon program growth, financial opportunities, and site conditions to optimize land and financial resources and incrementally enhance the neighborhood quality. The phasing concepts in the Neighborhoods Planning Study incorporate program and financial data and promote sensitive redevelopment. As outlined in Chapter 4, the phasing milestones integrate the arrival of the LRT line, academic growth, potential endowment of a world-class performance center, and the enrollment growth of Sixth College.