

Orientation and Identity System

A primary goal of the College Community Redevelopment Project is to improve the image of the SDSU campus and its adjacent neighborhoods. This means establishing the area as a memorable place that people delight in discovering, and enjoy coming back to, whenever they can.

Vast numbers of people, in cars and buses on College Avenue, Montezuma Road and 55th Street, pass by the Core Sub-Area every day - and probably only a small proportion of them has any idea that they are passing by one of the most populous campuses of the California State University system. The area offers few clues to its association with such a venerable neighbor, and certainly no character of its own that would entice anyone to linger or explore. Without visual cues or directions, people who are specifically looking for the campus search to find an identity or sense of arrival.

Redevelopment must create a clear identity for the Core Sub-Area, and build into it the orienting devices that help us understand where we are, find where we need to go, and remember how much we enjoyed being there. As the Orientation and Identity System diagram (page 37) indicates, these can be a series of quite common and simple devices which, together support the sense of place and excitement that the Core Sub-Area needs to achieve.

Gateways and View Corridors

Perhaps the most important element of any orientation system is the network of features that announce arrival, or make it clear that one has entered a distinctive place. The most common of these is the "gateway", an urban design event that marks the threshold between outside and in. The gateway in turn establishes the view corridor toward landmarks, events, or features. In the Core Sub-Area, the location of gateways is obvious:

- ‡ *at the College Avenue curve:* the unusually significant point where southbound College passes under the pedestrian bridge and veers left at the crest of the hill. The gateway here should be designed around a clear view into the development, providing a tantalizing glimpse of the attractions beyond.
- A major enhancement to the sense of arrival on this corridor could be achieved by replacing or retrofitting the existing pedestrian bridge with a dramatic sculptural piece that combines art and engineering to make a very literal gateway into the Core Sub-Area.
- ‡ *at the intersection of College and Montezuma:* where the same effects can be achieved for north and west bound traffic.
- ‡ *at the intersection of Campanile Drive and Montezuma:* which could become the true, symbolic entry to the campus. To announce the presence of SDSU more clearly at this point and to give this important entry greater

visual significance, the Urban Design Plan proposes extending the campus character out to Montezuma in two ways:

- ‡ by landscaping the broad Campanile corridor with materials, colors, textures and specific elements of the campus grounds that proclaim the campus connection in a very bold and straightforward way; and
- ‡ by clearing a long sight line from Montezuma, directly into the campus and the historic tower from which Campanile Drive takes its name. Primarily, this means removing the raised planter in the middle of the Transit Center to clear an axial view down the center of the campus mall.
- ‡ *at the intersection of Montezuma and 55th Street:* which, given the natural topography of Montezuma Road as it climbs to the corner, offers another strong opportunity to mark eastbound entry to the Core Sub-Area.

In addition to marking these key gateways, the Plan proposes the development of unique streetscapes on College Avenue and Montezuma to clarify the edges or boundaries of the Core Sub-Area. Montezuma is made with landscape; College blisters with commerce. Together, their contrasting nature adds another important intrigue that challenges passersby to stop and find out what the Core Sub-Area is about.

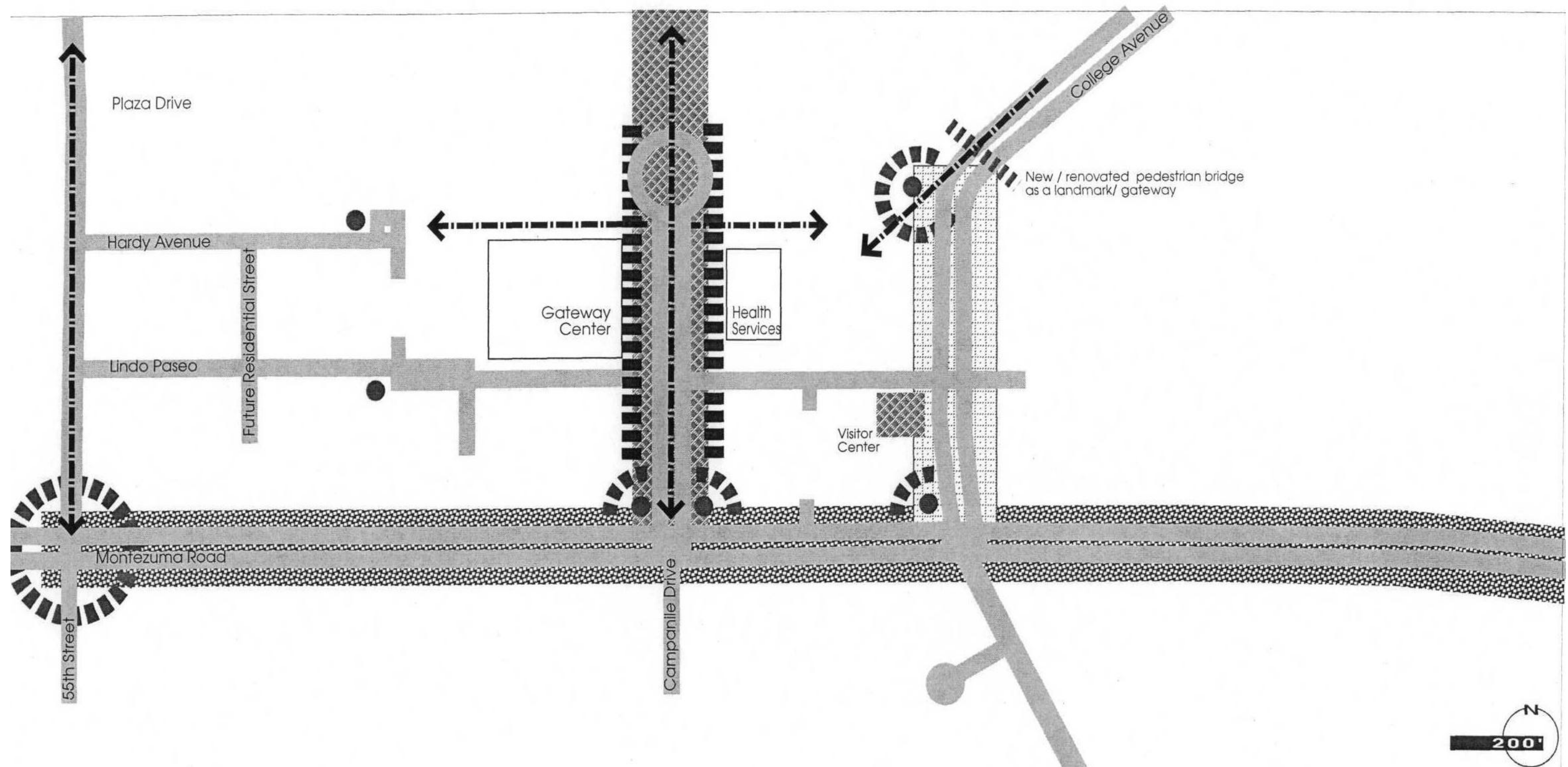
Providing a convenient and useful *place* to stop is obviously a key component of making this happen. SDSU has also identified a critical need for new students and campus visitors to be able to find an immediately accessible information source where they can be directed to the correct campus building or garage.

- A possible Visitor Information Center, including campus and Core Sub-Area maps, parking stickers, a friendly, knowledgeable face, and approximately 10 short-term parking spaces, could be considered on the southwest corner of the College and Lindo Paseo intersection. This location is highly visible and easily accessible from all directions.

Landmarks

The final element of the orientation and identity system is a smaller scale network of internal landmarks and orchestrated views that exploit the structural framework and unique site conditions throughout the Core Sub-Area; for example, creating a memorable landmark, which could be something as simple as twisting the stair tower on the corner of the adjacent building, at the termination of Hardy Avenue. Being able to recognize places from a distance and relate them in space to other parts of the complex helps us understand how the area is organized, which in turn, promotes a sense of security and comfort with the place.

- Public art may be viewed as an opportunity to create landmarks, identities and special interest within the area.



- Legend:**
- View Corridors
 - Gateway Expression
 - Landmarks / Architectural Features
 - Commercial Facades
 - Montezuma Road Streetscape
 - Extension of Campus Character

CORE SUB-AREA URBAN DESIGN PLAN
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