# Introduction

On January 7, 2021, the University of California, Santa Cruz (UC Santa Cruz) released for public review the draft environmental impact report (Draft EIR) for the proposed 2021 Long Range Development Plan (2021 LRDP). The Draft EIR was prepared under the Board of Regents of the University of California Regents’ (UC Regents’) direction in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Sections 21000–21177) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387). The UC Regents is serving as the lead agency under CEQA for consideration of certification of the EIR and has principal responsibility for deciding whether to approve the 2021 LRDP.

## Public Review and Responses to Comments

In accordance with Sections 15087 and 15105 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the Draft EIR was circulated for public review and comment to responsible agencies, as well as members of the public, for 60 days (January 7, 2021, through March 8, 2021) (beyond the normal 45-day review period that is required under CEQA). UC Santa Cruz also held online public sessions on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 and Thursday, February 4, 2021 from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., to receive comments on the Draft EIR. Comment letters received on the Draft EIR and a transcript of oral testimony provided at the public hearing are provided in their entirety in Chapter 2, “Comments and Responses to Comments.”

Responses to each of the comments received are provided in Chapter 2 of this document as part of the final environmental impact report (Final EIR). Although some of the comments have resulted in changes to the text of the Draft EIR (see Chapter 4, “Corrections and Revisions to the Draft EIR”), none of the changes constitute “significant new information,” which would require recirculation of the Draft EIR. “Significant new information” is defined in Section 15088.5(a) of the State CEQA Guidelines as follows:

(1) A new significant environmental impact would result from the project or from a new mitigation measure proposed to be implemented.

(2) A substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact would result unless mitigation measures are adopted that reduce the impact to a level of insignificance.

(3) A feasible project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed would clearly lessen the environmental impacts of the project, but the project’s proponents decline to adopt it.

(4) The Draft EIR was so fundamentally and basically inadequate and conclusory in nature that meaningful public review and comment were precluded.

None of these circumstances has arisen from comments on the Draft EIR; therefore, recirculation is not required.

The Draft EIR, Final EIR, and associated appendices are available for review online at: https://lrdp.ucsc.edu.

As required by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(b), at least 10 days before consideration of the Final EIR for certification, UC Santa Cruz provided a written response (hard or electronic copy) to each public agency that submitted written comments on the Draft EIR.

## Modification Since Issuance of the 2021 LRDP Draft EIR: Student Housing West

On March 18, 2021, the UC Regents reapproved the Student Housing West Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2005012113), which was identified as a cumulative project in Chapter 4, “Cumulative Impacts,” of the 2021 LRDP Draft EIR. The reapproved project is the same one described in the 2021 LRDP Draft EIR. The project had been previously approved in 2019 by the UC Regents; however, project implementation was delayed due to a legal challenge to the EIR. As noted on page 4-7 of the 2021 LRDP Draft EIR, the Superior Court had previously upheld the adequacy of the Student Housing West EIR but overturned the approval based on issues with the UC Regents’ findings. The 2021 LRDP Draft EIR described the Student Housing West as a “Planned but not Operational” project and it was included in the cumulative analysis. The treatment of the Student Housing West Project within the Draft EIR for the 2021 LRDP is still considered appropriate, and its reapproval does not alter the conclusions of or necessitate revisions to the 2021 LRDP Draft EIR.

## Organization of the Responses to Comments

CEQA requires a lead agency that has prepared a Draft EIR to consult with and obtain comments from responsible and trustee agencies that have jurisdiction by law with respect to the project, and to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR (State CEQA Guidelines Sections 15086 and 15087).

Sections 15088(a) and (c) of the State CEQA Guidelines also require a lead agency to evaluate comments on environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the Draft EIR and to prepare written responses to comments raising significant environmental issues. The Final EIR is the mechanism for responding to these comments. Responses are not required for comments regarding merits of the proposed project or regarding issues not related to the project’s environmental impacts. Several of the comments on the Draft EIR state the commenter’s preference about whether the 2021 LRDP should be modified or approved, or provide general statements concerning the content of the Draft EIR. Detailed responses are not warranted or required by CEQA for comments that do not address the environmental issues related to the proposed plan. Such instances are noted in the responses. The UC Regents will be able to review all comments, including those that do not warrant a response under CEQA, before considering certification of the Final EIR or approval of the proposed 2021 LRDP.

Each comment has been reproduced according to the type of commenter (state agency, local/regional agency, organization, individual, commenter at public hearing) with responses following each comment. In some instances, clarifications of the text of the Draft EIR may be required. In those cases, the text of the Draft EIR is revised and the changes compiled in Chapter 4, “Corrections and Revisions to the Draft EIR.” The text deletions are shown with strikeout (~~strikeout~~), and additions are shown with underline (underline).

## Project Decision Process

This document and the Draft EIR, as amended through responses to comments, together constitute the Final EIR, which will be considered by the UC Regents prior to a decision on whether to approve the project. If the UC Regents decide to approve the project, the UC Regents, as required by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15090, must first certify that the Final EIR was completed in compliance with CEQA’s requirements, was reviewed and considered by the UC Regents and UC Santa Cruz, and reflects their independent judgment and analysis. The UC Regents would then be required to adopt findings of fact on the disposition of each significant environmental impact, as required by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091. If significant and unavoidable impacts (those that cannot be mitigated to less than significant) would result from implementing the 2021 LRDP and the UC Regents chooses to approve the 2021 LRDP, the UC Regents would need to adopt a statement of overriding considerations, under State CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, explaining reasons the UC Regents believe the proposed plan should move forward despite these environmental effects. A mitigation monitoring and reporting program, which is required by State CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(d), has been included as part of Chapter 3, “Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program” of this Final EIR and will be adopted by the UC Regents in conjunction with any project approval.