
UC Santa Cruz Core West Parking Structure

Questions and Answers

The following is intended to provide an overview of plans and processes related to the Core West Parking Structure. For more details, please see the *Physical Planning and Construction Web site*: www2.ucsc.edu/ppc/

► **What is the proposed project?**

The project is the construction of a 178,000 square-foot parking structure on an existing parking lot near the intersection of Heller and McLaughlin Drives on campus. As currently proposed, the structure would provide a total of approximately 500 spaces (a net increase of approximately 290 spaces). The structure would have six parking decks, including one deck that would be constructed below ground level. The project also includes new or improved pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities to provide access to the structure and the surrounding area.

► **Does UC Santa Cruz really need more parking spaces?**

The campus now relies on a total of approximately 5,200 parking spaces to accommodate the needs of approximately 11,000 students, 3,000 employees, and all visitors to the campus. Although alternative transportation measures have been very successful at UCSC, the lack of availability of parking in certain parts of campus has become a serious problem. One of those areas is the parking zone that is served by the proposed project, which is currently operating at an average occupancy rate of more than 90 percent.

► **The campus has never had a parking structure before. Why is one needed now?**

The current campus Long Range Development Plan (1988 LRDP) and previous LRDPs have sought to meet the programmatic needs of the campus while preserving the natural physical setting to the maximum extent feasible. To that end, all LRDPs since the 1963 LRDP have identified an eventual need for parking structures as a means of providing adequate parking, while minimizing the surface area of land required for that purpose. The 1988 LRDP identified a need for as many as two structures, with 750 spaces each, to accommodate campus growth to 15,000 students.

► **Why build a structure at this location?**

The proposed site is one of two sites identified in the LRDP as suitable for the construction of a parking structure. The site is now occupied by a parking lot, minimizing the project's intrusion into the undeveloped landscape. Moreover, the site is in a parking zone experiencing very heavy demand. It is also a suitable site from a traffic and circulation perspective, since it is at the edge of the campus core on a major access road (allowing for the diversion of incoming traffic to the structure without a need for that traffic to traverse the pedestrian-oriented campus core).

► **Why is a structure of this size (500 spaces) being proposed?**

The structure would actually provide a net increase of 290 spaces. That's because by the year 2000, when the project would be completed, the Science Hill area of campus (and the parking zone where the structure would be built) will lose approximately 210 spaces due to the construction of new projects, including the Interdisciplinary Sciences and Physical Sciences Buildings. So, at the same time that more people will be working and studying in the area, parking stock will be reduced. The structure is proposed at a size of 500 spaces to replace those lost spaces and to accommodate campus enrollment and employment increases in the zone through the year 2004.

► **If it is too convenient to park, more people will drive instead of using alternative transportation. Why not encourage use of alternatives?**

The campus intends to continue its vigorous program supporting the development and acceptance of alternative transportation options. At this time, more than half of all person-trips to and from the campus are by some means other than a single-occupant automobile, making the UCSC transportation alternative program one of the most successful in the state. The Draft EIR does include

Continued on reverse side

consideration of project alternatives that would not require the construction of a structure, but it is not certain that those alternatives are fully feasible as replacements for the structure or are able to meet all of the objectives of the project.

► **What are the objectives of the parking structure project?**

The primary objective of the parking structure project is to support the campus's academic mission and development objectives by providing adequate parking facilities to remedy existing and projected parking space deficiencies. This objective also supports the hiring and retention of excellent faculty and staff. (Especially for lecturers and other faculty and staff who arrive at campus at varying times during the day, the lack of adequate parking can be a deterrent to continued employment.) The provision of adequate parking to accommodate community access to campus cultural events and other activities is also a project objective. These objectives are balanced by an objective calling for limitations on the amount of parking to be provided as the campus grows, in conformance with maximum per-capita parking space ratios by user group as defined in the LRDP.

► **What is the purpose of the EIR?**

The purpose of the EIR is to inform decision makers of the environmental effects of a project that is being considered for approval. According to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the EIR is intended "to identify the significant effects of a project on the environment, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which significant effects can be mitigated or avoided." The EIR process also serves to involve members of the public in the decision-making process.

► **What is the EIR process?**

Beginning with a Notice of Project (NOP) on October 1, 1998 and a Scoping meeting on October 15, 1998, the campus has addressed all of the required steps in the EIR process, as specified by CEQA. The opportunities for public comment included a 45-day period during which the Draft EIR was circulated for review and comment by the public and other interested parties. This period was extended by one week in order to offer a second public hearing. All written and verbal comments received on the Draft EIR will be included in the Final EIR, along with the campus's responses to them.

► **Why should students pay for parking they can't use?**
Remote parking fees support remote parking projects and alternative transportation programs. The parking structure will be funded by fees paid by all close-in parkers.

► **Why are spaces being created for faculty and staff, and not students?**

Since 1988, UCSC has built 334 permanent parking spaces; 280 (84 percent) of those were remote parking for students. Due to construction, the campus will lose at least 205 spaces in the campus core—all used by faculty and staff.

► **When will the final decision be made regarding whether or not to build this parking structure?**

The UC Regents authorized seeking external funding for the project at its May 1999 meeting. The Regents will consider the Final EIR and project proposal as early as July 1999.

► **If the project is approved, how will it be funded?**

As required by law, the project will be funded by a loan paid by parking permit fees. For details on fee structures and anticipated changes related to this project and several other aspects of the transportation program, see a fact sheet on parking fee increases (www.ucsc.edu/currents/98-99/03-15/parkingrates.pdf).

► **If the project is approved, when will construction begin, and when will it end?**

Construction could begin as early as summer 1999 and be completed as early as summer 2000.

► **Who will be allowed to park in the proposed structure?**

Under LRDP policies, "close-in parking lots," such as those in the campus core, are available primarily to faculty, staff, and graduate students. Undergraduates are accommodated primarily in remote lots, except that those with special needs may obtain close-in permits. The structure, like the existing lot, would be subject to these policies, meaning that faculty, staff and graduate students holding A or B parking permits would be the primary users of this facility. Members of the public attending special events would also be accommodated in non-peak use periods.

This information provided by the UC Santa Cruz Public Information Office (May 1999)