

PRESS RELEASE. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE. September 17, 2018

Response of the East Meadow Action Committee (EMAC) to Today's Announcement by the University of California Santa Cruz (UCSC) Regarding the Student Housing West Proposal

The university is correct that there is a student housing shortage on the UCSC campus. However, it fails to acknowledge that mismanagement by the university is the cause of that shortage, in two ways.

First, the university in 2008 proposed a major new housing project, dubbed East Campus Infill (ECI). For that project it successfully completed all environmental reviews, won final approval from the Board of Regents, and advertised for initial bids. Those bids came in at an average of 19% below budget. Then in 2009 the university inexplicably and on its own initiative cancelled that project. That project has never been revived.

Second, the university in subsequent years admitted well over 2000 additional students for whom it had no additional housing. It accommodated a minority of those by overcrowding the existing on-campus housing, and sent the rest into the neighboring community, which was already suffering its own housing shortage.

The rational and humane way to expand a university is to prepare additional facilities before the additional students are admitted. The university has instead put the cart several years before the horse. And the students are paying the price.

The university now belatedly seeks to build the student housing it should have provided before surging admissions. Its proposal is rushed and ill-conceived. It proposes putting 95% of the new housing on one 13 acre site, and 5% on another 13 acre site (the East Meadow). On a campus with surprisingly limited buildable land under current restrictions, to put 5% of this entire project, a mere 150 beds, on 13 acres, is a breathtaking waste of a scarce public resource.

Furthermore, those 150 beds on 13 acres are proposed to be hasty prefab construction, raising the concern that cheapie/quickie will over time be less durable and ultimately more costly on a life-cycle basis.

Under the university's proposal there would be no net increase in the number of on-campus beds for 5 more years, and that does not include whatever additional delay might be caused by the controversy of putting that 5% of the project in the East Meadow. And the fact is 95% of the opposition to the entire project is generated by just that 5% of it in the East Meadow.

Through all this the university refuses to revive the abandoned ECI project in any form, even though the ECI is non-controversial and has previously been through all required approvals. Nor has the university given full and fair consideration to the on-campus sites the university itself has listed as alternatives for this project.

The university has not done students any favors by creating this mess and it is not doing students any favors by how it is belatedly trying to clean it up. The adverse consequences of past mismanagement are seldom cured by further mismanagement.

All things considered, it is not surprising that, in a rare move, the university's own Design Advisory Board, comprised of prominent California architects selected by the university, has voted unanimously to oppose putting that 5% in the East Meadow.

(For further information about the East Meadow Action Committee, visit our website at [eastmeadowaction.org](http://eastmeadowaction.org).)