

March 12, 2023

Dear friends, alumni, students,

I write last minute to share info on the Regent's meeting next Wednesday 3/15 --

UCSC is fast-tracking financial approval of the "Hagar Development," the privatized childcare center and relocated family student housing, sited on the 17 acre East Meadow gateway. Costs have doubled and no changes will be made.

UCSC's proposal to Regents: <https://regents.universityofcalifornia.edu/regmeet/mar23/f11.pdf>

Below I have listed my observations on this proposal.

UCSC must build holistic student housing. UCSC should prioritize care and justice for both the current and future student body and the campus environment, urgently. There are alternative sites, even at base of campus, and other projects can be pursued now, such as the cancelled east campus infill project.

Decision to destroy the campus gateway meadow is literally unnecessary.

The East Meadow Action Committee also [posted a brilliant analysis](#) with comments on student financial impact.

If you wish to send comments opposing the proposal, send to regentsoffice@ucop.edu, if possible send today Sunday 3/12 or latest Monday morning 3/13. Included at the top it is about March 15-16, 2023 Regents meeting, Agenda Item F11, UCSC's Student Housing West Project.



*On the left is Hagar Development for the gateway East Meadow next to examples of 20th century sprawl.
A lesson in the worst of planning: climate change, islands of 1950s nuclear family, autotopia.
Is this the gift we give to the future?*

Here are my observations on UCSC's proposal to the Regents --

- No explanation for decision to abandon public-private partnership (P3) contract.

- No data provided on how construction costs for East Meadow Hagar development have risen over 100%. This is a doubling in price, from \$70,398,993.17 in 2021 to \$145,615,000 in 2023, comparing then and now hard and soft costs. This is a project cost of \$835,850 per apartment unit. ([F11 March 2023 p. 11, 17, 18](#); and [F5 Supplement #1 March 2021 p. 84](#))
- No explanation on how 88% of this 145+ million dollars will be paid by "external financing" and where it comes from. ([F11 March 2023 p. 11, 17](#)) (Separately, as an aside, UC gave [500 million dollars to Blackrock to invest in their Real Estate Investment Trust](#) in January.)
- No explanation for why no costs are given for the larger 3,000 bed undergraduate and graduate housing Heller Development. If the cost has grown proportionally, the total cost may well be over a Billion dollars.
- No access to the referenced real estate report with data on rents being between 41 and 56% below market rate between 2025 and 2028 when rooms would start to be available.
- No explanation on why the P3 developer's fee is being paid out from campus "auxiliary reserves." These reserves are paid for by money from students' on-campus rents. Given the needs for student resources, it seems maybe the 6.5 million dollars should come from a different source. ([F11 March 2023 p. 12](#))
- No honesty when they describe the Hagar project sited for the East Meadow. Misleading claims it is "developed respecting the site's prominent location and surrounding landscape," and claiming its design is the "type of development suitable to the site and geology." A rough take off on their site plans reveals it appears that around 50% of the 17 acres of the East Meadow will be paved over with concrete and asphalt.
- No acknowledgement that the project's EIR concluded the alternatives were superior to the University's proposed project. ([RDEIR Chapter 5](#))
- No acknowledgement that why Regents were asked to approve a 'statement of overriding considerations' was because the anticipated environmental impact was so much, they needed to weigh "the benefits of the proposed project against its unavoidable significant environmental effects." ([F1 March 2019 p. 19](#))
- No explanation of why there is ongoing litigation and what the litigation has been about.
- No acknowledgement that in 2019 the Regents expressed sympathy for concerns about developing the gateway East Meadow and made the special move to invite an alumni representative to discuss these concerns and share alternative solutions. ([Meeting Minutes, Finance and Capital Strategies Committee, January 16, 2019](#))
- No acknowledgement of past student leadership speaking up about campus housing issues. The Student Union Assembly passed a Resolution in March 2019 seeking to delay Student Housing West Regental approval. And in June 2018, the Student Union Housing Working Group issued a List of Demands about housing for UCSC CHES and administrative leadership and for the UC Board of Regents.

- No acknowledgement that students with families and residents of family student housing in 2019 protested against the privatization of childcare services that is part of the proposed East Meadow Hagar Development package, as reported by the [City on a Hill Press](#) and [SC Sentinel](#).
- No acknowledgement that in 2018 an [online petition](#) received over 88,000 signatures asking the Chancellor to save UCSC's East Meadow from Destruction.
- No acknowledgement of the voices of Alumni, Campus Boosters, and Emeriti Administrators and Faculty. In addition to many individual letters, 50 alumni and supporters of the campus signed three joint letters to campus leadership. The authors include emeriti UC Regents, emeriti UCSC administrators, Foundation Trustees, Alumni Councilors, and faculty and donors. The joint letters from [June 27, 2018](#); [November 1, 2018](#); and [July 31, 2020](#).
- No acknowledgement that the UC Santa Cruz Foundation Board of Trustees [passed a Resolution](#) in September 2018 concerning the project, acknowledging the presence of " 'unusually broad, vocal and sustained criticisms and opposition.' "
- No acknowledgement that UCSC's Design Advisory Board in 2018 disagreed with the decision to build on the meadow. They recorded in their minutes they are "still opposed to the selected site and felt that the campus was 'making a big mistake.'" and "strongly urged for an analysis of alternative sites... The Board felt the need to reiterate that the enduring quality of the open meadow was well understood by all..."
- No acknowledgement that in May 2018, former Chancellor Blumenthal decided to extend the EIR comment period because of the literally unprecedented quantity of concerns among campus supporters. UCSC received over 350 comments in response.

Kindest regards,
Matthew

" 'In a sense the entrance to the campus and the viewshed there have been such a major part of this campus since its inception,' he said. 'I can understand how someone would feel that putting a project there really undermines the basic essence of the UC Santa Cruz campus — I can understand that and I even sympathize with it to some extent. But I think like any controversy, this one will have to play out.' "

- Former UC Santa Cruz Chancellor Blumenthal,
September 2018 Santa Cruz Sentinel interview