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UCSB Office of Campus Planning & Design
c/o Vision2025
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Re: Recirculated Draft EIR for the Proposed UCSB 2009 LRDP – Comments

A GRATEFUL PART OF THE UCSB COMMUNITY SINCE 1982

I have lived near UCSB ever since arriving for graduate school in the Physics department in 1982. UCSB has offered many opportunities to me over all of these years. Hardly a week goes by without me attending a seminar, a lecture a film or a dance on campus.

GROWTH IS NOT A BENEFIT

In contrast to these substantive benefits, UCSB has seen growth itself as a benefit. When I ran for Goleta City Council in 2001, a member of the University staff was eager to meet with me to let me know that UCSB wanted to grow. As if any local leader would automatically see this as a benefit.

At that time I explained that Goleta and Santa Barbara have a severe jobs-housing imbalance. That more jobs and more students would make this worse, not better. And that more of what was a good thing would not any longer be a good thing.

SUSTAINABILITY: OPPORTUNITY LOST

At this time I was Chair of the Sierra Club – Santa Barbara Group. The Sierra Club is very concerned about local and global impacts of resource consumption. And one of the largest consumers of resources is private automobile use. Not just oil and metal but land.

We noted that while UCSB students are likely to use sustainable transportation, staff were much less likely to do so and faculty almost never did. It soon became clear why: Incentives and disincentives.

In particular, students were given free bus passes as an incentive to use transit instead of driving. Staff and faculty were not.

But a faculty member friend gave a very interesting insight beyond that. She lived in faculty housing and rode her bicycle to campus each day. Until one quarter when she needed to drive on campus twice a week to bring equipment with her. She discovered that it cost less for her to buy an unlimited parking permit than it was to pay for parking twice a week.

And she discovered something else: Once she had the unlimited parking permit, she found herself driving every day. It seemed a waste not to, once she had paid for it.

I brainstormed with the campus sustainable transportation official. We came up with a plan, which I will attach. We were allowed to present it to the Chancellor's special committee on parking.

It was considered carefully. Policy changes were made. At the time we presented, if a person drove nine days a month, it was cheaper to buy an unlimited permit. After the policy changes, it

was cheaper to buy a parking permit if a person drove on campus four days a month. Yes, the situation was made twice as bad as before.

Here was a case where UCSB could take a leadership role in giving incentives to reduce driving alone to campus. It would be win-win-win: Good for the environment and the community. Good for UCSB not to have to build new parking structures at great expense. And good for those who do drive on campus because it would keep parking demand down, freeing up spaces and keeping costs down.

Yet it was a path not taken.

PAST GROWTH HAS CAUSED HARM – PAST PROMISES HAVE BEEN UNFULFILLED

In the 27 years since I have been here, UCSB has grown. Roads and intersections have been widened. Yet no new bikeways have been developed. Some were even closed since I came here. Some MTD services like the MTD bike shuttle were ended because UCSB did not support their continuation.

UCSB teaches Environmental Studies. And yet the greatest environmental study of all would be to set an example of a better way. While some token measures have been taken, little of substance has been done.

At the recent LRDP workshop, the Transportation consultant offered widened roads and intersections as “mitigation” for planned growth. It never even occurred to this paid consultant who had worked on this for three years that wider roads and intersections are a degradation of service for pedestrians and cyclists. A degradation that itself needs to be mitigated.

It was also explained at the workshop that the State is asking all campuses to grow. Well, a growth of UCLA in a city of millions has a different impact than a growth of UCSB in a city of tens of thousands. We are absolutely up against resource limits here.

KEY POINTS

I would like to offer these key points:

- 1) That UCSB must first mitigate their past impacts before causing new ones.
- 2) That UCSB lead the way in environmental sustainability, not use these words as a way to jam growth in first and "mitigate" with talk and no action.
- 3) That any expansion must be mitigated before the growth occurs. For example, in their current plans, student enrollment would lead housing construction by four years. Housing must be built before enrollment increases.
- 4) UCSB's transportation plans are mid-20th century plans centered on accommodating private motor vehicles. UCSB must lead the way with providing incentives. And providing facilities for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit. Starting with bike/ped freeway crossings to bypass the over-widened and hostile crossings that have been created so far.
- 5) That UCSB cannot use up all remaining resources in the area or else no other development, housing or jobs will ever be possible.
- 6) At the workshop it was stated that money would be tight for mitigations. That defies basic logic. Money cannot be tight for mitigations. If money is tight, it should be cut from the growth, not from the mitigations. If you can't handle the growth, don't create it.
- 7) The greatest education UCSB could provide the community and the world would be to create a model of true sustainability for the future. That should be the heart of Long Range Development.

Sincerely,

Robert Bernstein



Win-Win Proposal for Campus Parking and Transportation

The Problem:

Current pricing for parking is too high for occasional daily users while the permit price is relatively low. If an employee needs to drive even 1/3 of the time, it is cheaper to buy a permit than to pay for the occasional use.

And, once an employee has an unlimited-use permit, there is no incentive to refrain from driving on other days. One professor told me she used to bicycle every day from Faculty Housing. Then, she needed to drive to campus for just one class to bring equipment. It was cheaper to buy the permit than to pay for just the days she drove. Once she had the permit, she found herself driving every day, "Because I had already paid for it."

The current Transportation Alternative Program targets people who already use transportation alternatives regularly and gives them free permits to drive. This actually can encourage more driving, not less.

It is the person who usually drives to campus who needs to be targeted with incentives not to drive.

The Solution:

Provide a parking pricing system which is revenue-neutral (no increase in fees for current people who drive) yet which allows every person to save money every single time they refrain from driving. Every day an employee heads out to UCSB, they should have the opportunity to think, "Hey, if I take the bus or ride a bike to campus, I can save money! Save money and help the planet and the community at the same time!"

The Details of the Solution:

Some ideas that have been offered already:

- 1) A transponder system exactly like that used on many roads already.
This allows fees to be charged only for the actual time used, while avoiding the need for stopping at a gate.
- 2) In-vehicle parking meters. A system in use at other large institutions to accomplish a similar goal.
- 3) "Bingo Card" type permits that allow a certain number of uses per card.

The details are easy, once there is an understanding of the concept.

The Concept:

Pay for the parking you use. Be rewarded for reducing the need for parking.

If we reduce the need for parking, we can avoid the need to build more expensive lots and that keeps the price down for those who do drive.

One other change is needed: To give the Transportation Alternatives office at UCSB the independent authority to provide transportation alternatives. Currently, this office is underneath Parking Services! Changing this hierarchy will be important to promoting creative win-win alternatives instead of getting stuck in the rut of old habits.

With small changes to the pricing system for parking at UCSB, we have a Win-Win opportunity. We can provide adequate parking for those who drive, we can provide a reward to those who refrain from driving, and we can be kinder to the planet and to the local community by reducing traffic. We also can avoid the need to build lots on open space, perhaps the biggest environmental benefit of all.

Best wishes,
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