UCSD ready to expand

By TANYA KURLAND
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Officials at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) have released the environmental impact report (EIR) for their proposed expansion plan of the campus that is expected to accommodate students, staff and faculty through the year 2020.

The process for the EIR started last fall, following the school’s need to update the Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) last revisited in 1989. The Plan identifies 297 acres of land on the approximately 1,150-acre campus for new development or redevelopment. School officials expect up to 29,000 students by 2020-2021, a 15 percent increase above the total indicated in the 1989 plan.

Under the proposed expansion plan, the campus land west of Interstate 5 would continue to be developed with academic, housing, mixed use, and sports, recreation and general services uses. The campus property east of I-5 would continue to be developed with medical, academic/science research park, academic/community-oriented housing, sports and recreation land uses.

“We are...confident that this plan will enable UCSD to manage its growth in an orderly, coherent fashion that will be sensitive to the needs and interest of the surrounding community and beyond”, said John Woods, UCSD’s vice chancellor for Resource Management & Planning.

Several factors were considered in producing the 2004 LRDP, including academic and non-academic program requirements, distribution of student enrollment across the academic programs, optimum rate of student and faculty growth, appropriate ratio of graduate students to undergrads, need for services such as student housing, parking, transportation, recreation, childcare and administrative support; opinions of various campus constituencies and community stakeholders; and the needs and interests of the surrounding community, city, state and nation.

“What we had heard throughout the environmental process so far is that people are most concerned about knowing exactly what is being proposed, having the ability to work with the community to address any project’s specific impacts and wanting to have better communication with the university. And we have heard that message loud and clear,” said Milt Phegley, campus community planner.

The EIR does include three projects that were actually listed on the 1989 Long Range Development Plan, including the new School of Management buildings to be situated on a triangular-shaped site north of the northeast part of Eleanor Roosevelt College and adjacent to Ridge Walk on its eastern boundary.

Planned for the campus as well is the expansion of the Supercomputer Center. The existing facility is located between Ridge Walk and Hopkins Drive in the north/central part of the west campus. The addition would be comprised of approximately 80,000 gross square feet, with most of the building allocated for office space. Approximately 15 percent will provide for the expansion of the existing computer room.

A new parking garage is also proposed for the area east of the Social Sciences Building and west of Hopkins Drive in the north/central part of the west campus. The parking structure is anticipated to be set into the existing topography so that approximately half of the structure would be beneath the ground surface. The parking structure would be a multi-level facility that would provide approximately 1,400 parking stalls.

The LRDP and draft EIR will be presented during the Thursday, June 9 meeting of the La Jolla Shores Association, held at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, Building T-29, off La Jolla Shores Drive.

A public hearing to receive comments on the draft EIR will be held Monday, June 14, at the University Center on the UCSD campus, from 6 to 8 p.m., in Conference Room 111A.

“As far as implementing the Plan, we are going to be working on having much better communication with the neighbors in terms of what we are doing, when we are doing it and why we are doing it,” Phegley said.

Documents are available for review at http://physicalplanning.ucsd.edu/lrdp2004/. The LRDP can also be perused at San Diego’s main downtown library; the La Jolla Library, Florence Riford branch, 7555 Draper Ave.; the University Community Branch Library, 4155 Governor Drive; and UCSD’s Geisel Library.

The comments from the public review period will be inserted into the document and submitted to the Board of Regents for their review and approval. The board is set to vote on the plan this September.