

SJmn 9.23.99

Green light for parking garage

UCSC Growth
UC-Santa Cruz, city reach deal that allows construction to begin

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A planned parking garage at the University of California-Santa Cruz that sparked a mighty feud between campus and city officials will be built under an agreement announced Wednesday.

In exchange for the city's promise not to sue to stop construction of the six-level structure, campus officials agreed to contribute \$250,000 toward a transportation master plan for Santa Cruz.

The university further agreed to

shelve the idea of an "eastern access" connecting the campus to Highway 1. The long-planned roadway would have bypassed Mission Street through what is now the city's Pogonip park.

"We achieved much in this settlement," Santa Cruz Mayor Katherine Beiers said. "We feel we accomplished all that we wanted to do."

Because the university is state property, the project is not subject to city approval.

Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood hailed the deal as a "new era of co-

operation between the university and the city."

The town-gown spat flared this spring when city officials learned the university planned to build its first multilevel parking garage.

The \$11 million project, to be built over an existing parking lot, will provide 500 parking spaces, 290 more than exist now. Campus officials said they are needed to accommodate 3,000 more students expected in the next five years.

City leaders, including two who
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Greenwood



Beiers

UC-Santa Cruz garage gets green light

■ GARAGE

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teach at the campus and Beiers, who worked there as a librarian, accused the university of abandoning alternatives to the auto. The garage, they said, would encourage students and faculty members to use congested city streets to reach the bucolic campus in the hills above town.

Joining in the complaints were university neighbors and undergraduates, whose parking fees would be raised to pay for a garage open only

to faculty members, staff and graduate students.

University officials said they were being unfairly blamed for regional transportation troubles. Noting that the city of Santa Cruz is building a new, three-story, 400-space parking garage downtown, they said city officials were being hypocritical.

After the UC Board of Regents unanimously approved the garage in July, city officials threatened to sue, contending that the traffic burden it would create in town wasn't fully assessed.

To avoid a long and costly court

fight, city officials called in Assembly Speaker Pro Tem Fred Keeley, D-Santa Cruz, to mediate.

The deal hatched under Keeley's guidance calls for the city and the university each to contribute funds toward Santa Cruz's transportation plan. That plan is a required part of the city's general plan, which is to be updated by 2005. It is under city control and will set guidelines for growth and development in the city for the next 15 years.

The university agreed to drop plans for an eastern access road for the 15-year period covered in the

transportation plan. Campus officials said they could not relinquish that option altogether.

Councilman Keith Sugar, an environmental lawyer, said the university's concessions were significant. Although the deal does not give the city veto power over campus development, the university will be legally bound to abide by the city's transportation plan, he said.

It also means the university can no longer offer the eastern access road as a way to compensate for the additional traffic from campus development, Sugar said.