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Santa Cruz Mayor Katherine Beiers, Assemblyman Fred Keeley and UCSC Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood head to a press conference to announce their agreement Wednesday.

SC, university reach parking garage deal

Keeley brokers accord to end city's lawsuit

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UCSC Growth

✓ **SANTA CRUZ** — City officials agreed Wednesday to drop plans to sue UC Santa Cruz over its first parking garage in exchange for at least \$250,000 for a citywide transportation plan and promises of more cooperation on transportation and housing issues.

Assemblyman Fred Keeley, D-Bolder Creek, who helped facilitate the agreement, proclaimed a "new era of cooperation" between the city and the university.

The settlement signed by Mayor Katherine Beiers and UCSC Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood allows work to continue on the five-story garage and calls for better communication on development and traffic issues.

The \$11 million, employee-only parking garage is to be built on Science Hill. Site preparation has begun.

The City Council voted 3-2 on Aug. 10 to have city lawyers pursue a lawsuit over alleged flaws in the environmental impact report on the garage.

Keeley said Wednesday at a news conference

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on the settlement that Beiers had asked him a week earlier to help resolve the disagreement.

City officials have contended that the garage would add to traffic congestion on the Westside.

Wednesday's agreement calls for the university to contribute up to \$250,000 for a citywide transportation master plan and guarantee that it won't

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build an eastern entrance to the campus at least until 2015.

Keeley said he held meetings with city and university officials Aug. 20, 31 and Monday, when the final settlement was hammered out.

Keeley said relations between the city and the campus have been "tenuous" over the years.

But, he said, the negotiations went smoothly.

"From the first minute, dialogue was cordial and both were clear about and did not compromise their principles but reached a principled compromise," Keeley said. "This began and ended on a civil and cooperative tone."

When asked why it would take one of the state's most powerful Democrats to resolve the issues, Beiers said he is known and respected by both sides. Keeley said he agreed because he respects both Beiers and Greenwood.

While all three said they believe the three-page agreement begins a new era of cooperation, many of the same issues were addressed in the environmental impact report and in UCSC's long-range planning documents.

The eastern campus entrance, and an access road through the Pogonip, were part of the original plan when UCSC opened in 1965. Instead, the campus was built with entrances on the south and west sides.

The idea of adding a western access was opposed by environmentalists and past city council members, who said it would encourage more traffic on campus and harm the Pogonip city park.

Beiers said university officials had been discussing the eastern-access idea.

The agreement does not prohibit such a route but says it will not be part of the upcoming transportation master plan covering the period through 2015 or 2020.

The city will have final approval authority over the new master plan, according to the agreement.

The agreement also requires the city and university to work together to provide more housing on UCSC property, both on and off campus. Councilman Keith Sugar said this doesn't mean blanket approval for new projects.

The agreement holds UCSC to "use its best efforts" to comply with the city's general plan when it plans future off-campus projects. Under state law, the university doesn't need city approval for projects, but city officials can contest the validity of the environmental reviews.

The "best effort" requirement will affect the university's oceanfront Terrace Point property, where UCSC plans to develop a marine research facility and housing. Sugar said by the time that happens, the city will have strict requirements on housing at that site.

Sugar said the agreement doesn't stop the city from objecting to or suing over housing plans at Terrace Point, the city's last coastal meadow.

UC attorneys and officials have said the environmen-



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Santa Cruz Mayor Katherine Beiers and UCSC Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood review the parking accord deal between the city and the university before Wednesday's news conference.

tal impact report for the garage could withstand a legal challenge from the city. UCSC officials also said they had previously made some concessions to appease the city. They included expanding car pool and van pool programs on campus, developing park-and-ride lots and reducing the relative number of employees driving to campus.

University officials have said the garage is needed because of campus growth in recent years.

Though opposed to the garage, some City Council members had questioned whether the city could have prevailed in a lawsuit. Councilman Mike Rotkin, while wholeheartedly opposing the garage, has said the city should only take on legal battles it has a chance of winning.

The basis of the city's legal argument would have been that the impact report was invalid because it did not fully address the additional traffic that would be generated by improved parking on campus.

Sugar, an environmental lawyer, said the troubles could have been avoided if the university had worked with the city before moving ahead with the garage plans.

Sugar and others also have said the city could be considered hypocritical since it is building another garage downtown.

Sugar said he would have voted against the city's Soquel Avenue parking garage if he were on council when it was approved last year.

"There is a bit of institutional hypocrisy that while we move ahead with this (opposition to UCSC's garage) we are building our own garage," Sugar said in July.

At the same time, Councilman Christopher Krohn said, "The university is using this as an argument against the city in this area and there is some merit to that."