

But only with city approval

Poll indicates most people want UC high-tech center

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SANTA CRUZ — Of those who expressed their opinion in a poll conducted last July, 65 percent supported UCSC's proposed high-tech park, and 75 percent said it should come under some local controls and not be left only in the hands of the university system to plan.

The poll was commissioned by the University of California at Santa Cruz and conducted by Bregman and Associates of San Francisco.

Four hundred county residents were contacted and asked questions that ranged from the rating of major issues to public awareness of local political representatives.

An emphasis was put on UCSC proposed high-tech complex, since at the date of the poll the issue was in doubt as to whether it would end up as a ballot measure or be settled out of the polling booth by UCSC administrators and city councilmembers.

It landed on the Nov. 8 ballot as Measure A, which attempts to force the university to send its plans through city planning.

Pollsters found that less than half (42 percent) had heard of the proposed complex. That percentage should have swelled by now because of the publicity Measure A has generated.

People were asked: Because this project will not only affect the university, the local community should have some control over its planning. Some 75 percent agreed.

When asked: The university has a good record regarding its planning and concern for the environment; therefore, the university should not be controlled by city or county planning departments, only 18 percent agreed.

Asked if there should be a ballot measure to determine if the center should be built, 21 percent said they strongly favor putting it to vote. Thirty-five percent somewhat favor; 13 percent somewhat oppose and 17 percent strongly oppose.

Reasons for supporting the center were that it will bring money to the university (33 percent), bring jobs (28), Santa Cruz will grow (21), there's a need to keep up with technology (21) and it will attract educated people (17).

The 35 percent who said the high-tech center should not be built said they worried about the need to build the Zayante Dam to accommodate the center's need for water (46 percent), the millions that will be spent on sewers and water (41), expected housing shortage (38) and the increase in population of up to 10,000 people (35).

The environment, as an item of top priority, seems to be falling in the polls.

The city's greenbelt ordinance and growth management ordinances could only muster 26 and 24 percentiles.

Public awareness of local politicians showed that state Sen. Henry Mello and Assemblyman Sam Farr were tops with 89 percent. Mello was liked by 63 percent and disliked by 17 percent. Farr got a 61 and 12 on the same scale.

Of county supervisors, Dan Forbus (76) and Gary Patton (75) were best known. Forbus had a 53 percent favorable and 21 percent unfavorable. Patton was 43 and 37.

Chancellor Robert Sinsheimer was known by only 23 percent and liked by 37 percent and disliked by 33 percent.

Apparently the poll did not question the 400 citizens on Santa Cruz city councilmembers.

About 70 percent believe that UCSC has had a beneficial effect on the community.

Of major issues, the poll found that 57 percent think education is the top issue. Reducing crime is on its heels with 56; minimizing unemployment got 41, protecting the environment got 23 and growth control got 19 percent.