

# City, UCSC clash over need for parking garage

*UCSC UCSC - Growth*  
But common ground found on transportation plans

By **DARREL W. COLE**  
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — City and UC Santa Cruz officials disagreed on major growth issues but found some first-time common ground at a joint meeting Tuesday.

Much of the discussion at the meeting — attended by the Santa Cruz City Council, university Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood and about 100 members of the public — centered on a controversial proposal to build a parking garage on Science Hill. The city doubts the need for the garage, as did a majority of the speakers at the meeting at Porter College. Greenwood offered to hold another public hearing on the project Tuesday.

But the news that caught some council members and city department heads by surprise was that the university will work on long-range transportation plans with the city.

Council members said they would welcome that because they believe the university should work with the city on such plans, like exploring rail service, more bus options and park-and-ride lots.

"We will do additional transportation studies," Greenwood said. "We do have a mandate to grow, and we've tried to accept responsibility about our plans. We'll do even more now. But unless we have some real regional solutions to transportation, we are in a dilemma here."

Greenwood also agreed to meet with Mayor Katherine Beiers and other council members once every two months. For the past 10 years, city leaders have met with UCSC officials once a year.

Councilman Christopher Krohn said he was pleased with the university's offer.

"It's significant that we will meet more," he said. "And transportation has to be a partnership. We have to look at extending shuttles and bus service and all those things. I think everyone has to understand this is a special campus; it's different here than any other campus, and I don't want it to be like the others."

Relations between the city and university have run hot and cold over the years, with university growth presenting a dilemma to city officials committed to slowing growth.

While housing and student enrollment also were part of the afternoon discussion, the parking garage was the focus of 45 minutes of public comment — and the source of some friction between council members and Greenwood.

Councilman Mike Rotkin led the charge. "I do believe the garage represents a serious problem," he said. "It's not a question of demand — everywhere there is demand for more parking. But we are reaching a limit as to what our city streets can handle."

Greenwood responded in kind, saying the university is treated differently. She noted that the city allowed 522 parking spaces at Gateway Center, 600-plus at Costco and is building the Soquel Avenue parking garage. She also mentioned UCSC's long-range plan, which states that the university will house 70 percent of its undergraduate students on campus by 2005; the university currently houses just 50 percent.

"If you want us to house 70 percent of

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Dan Coyro/Sentinel  
Santa Cruz City Councilman Keith Sugar and Mayor Katherine Beiers listen as UC Santa Cruz Chancellor M.R.C. Greenwood reads an opening statement during meeting on Tuesday.

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## County supervisor rips UCSC parking plan

By **DAN WHITE**  
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SANTA CRUZ — Two weeks after the City Council slammed a UC Santa Cruz plan for a six-story parking garage, county Supervisor Mardi Wormhoudt has stepped in to blast the \$10 million project.

Wormhoudt sent a pointed 15-page letter this week to campus planner Christine Aldecoa, who prepared the environmental impact report for the garage that campus officials hope to build on Science Hill.

On Tuesday, more than a dozen people spoke out against the project at a UC Santa Cruz/City Council meeting that drew 100 people.

Last month's public hearing on the environmental impact report drew 100 people to the campus. About a quarter of those were students. The rest were staff, faculty and community members. The only project supporters to speak out were science professors, whose offices and classrooms are near the garage site.

Wormhoudt wrote that the draft report for what would be the first campus parking garage contains many flaws, including an understatement of its visual impact. The letter, which touches on both logistical and political aspects of the project, was submitted during the 45-day public review period on the impact report.

The university has now decided to extend the review period for one week.

"It is hard to imagine how a six-story parking struc-

ture, prominently visible from a number of viewpoints, replacing an almost invisible parking lot, would not substantially degrade the visual quality of the site," Wormhoudt wrote.

The report says tall redwoods would be left standing in front of the building, and includes computerized renderings showing the building obscured by foliage. The report also mentions design alternatives, such as a first floor partially underground, which would reduce the height.

Wormhoudt said residents need more time to review the report. She called for a public hearing in a city neighborhood, not on campus, "so that city residents will have a better opportunity to ask their questions and express their concerns."

Aldecoa said Tuesday she only has had a chance to skim the letter, part of the official public commentary on the report.

The project could break ground this summer if the approval process goes as planned.

But the plan is dividing those who say a garage is necessary, overdue and inevitable, and those who call it an expensive attempt to solve a much larger parking and traffic problem.

The garage is a response to numerous complaints that parking in the campus interior is a nightmare. Supporters say it jibes with the campus' long-range growth plan, which calls for enrollment to grow from 11,000 students to 15,000.

Some opponents argue that by building a parking structure, campus officials are turning their backs on the original vision of the campus as a relatively traffic-free oasis and are not doing enough to solve traffic issues through alternatives such as improved bus service.

## Meeting

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students, you will have to let us have places to park their cars, and I don't see any way around that," Greenwood said. "I feel I have to defend our students, most of whom work 18-20 hours a week. I can't look students in the eye and say you can't have the mechanism to get off campus."

Councilman Keith Sugar responded: "Well, you could look students in the eye and say, 'There is a bus you could take.'"

Allison Endert, a student representative who sat among city and UCSC officials, said most students want more study of alternative transportation.

"Almost every undergraduate shares the concerns of the City Council," she said.

Endert also noted that the garage, as proposed, is for graduate students and faculty: "There is not a single space in that new garage for undergraduates. I know we would gladly take more bicycles and buses every day."

The Tuesday public hearing on the parking garage is set for 5-6:30 p.m. at the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium.

University of California regents ultimately will decide whether the garage is built. Although the City Council and now Wormhoudt have come out against the project, local government agencies have no direct say.



Wormhoudt  
Slams project