

Accord sought for high-tech research center

By JOHN McNICHOLAS
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SANTA CRUZ — UCSC and the City of Santa Cruz may be moving toward a compromise of sorts on the research and manufacturing center proposed on campus.

Mayor Bruce Van Allen is negotiating with Stephen Reed, director of community and legislative relations for the university. The two are looking for a way, they say, to bring the city's planning process to bear on the project. If their talks pan out, Van Allen says he will try to persuade the City Council that a ballot measure on the project, requested by the liberal Santa Cruz Action Network, is unnecessary.

SCAN has asked the council to put the issue on the November ballot, and the council has placed the matter first on its Tuesday evening agenda.

The proposed ballot measure would do two things:

- It would require the council to ask the UC president and Regents to withhold funding for the project unless it complies with local land-use policies.

- It would require the city to try to block annexation of the project.

If the council refuses to put the matter on the ballot, there would not enough time to gather petition signatures and have them OK'd for the election.

The current proposal is for the university to lease 76 acres — about the same area as eight supermarkets — behind Crown College for building by high-tech firms. The center would be a mix of research, development and manufacturing.

It would employ some 2,000 workers after the 7-10 years it would take to build — 600 would work on assembly lines, 600 in administration and 800 in research and development. The university is also planning to build 500 housing units on Empire Grade.

UC officials estimate income from the development could be \$16 to \$19 million by 1990.

The city signed a contract in the 1960s to provide sewer and water service to the university, and the county promised to build an eastern access road to the campus. Both of those chits must be called in for the project to be built. City Councilman Michael Rotkin has estimated upgrading the sewer lines could cost from \$4 to \$8 million. There is no current estimate for the road.

Vociferous opposition to the project has developed, but the university is exempt from local land-use and planning laws. One manifestation of the opposition is SCAN's ballot measure.

Van Allen and Reed both say they are willing to give some ground.

"I sense not putting the measure on the ballot is the ground I can give," Van Allen said Friday. "My strong position is that there has to be some kind of strong local involvement, and some way for the community to have more than just the chancellor's assurance the development is going to be compatible with the city and community."

Reed says: "I think the objective of the ballot measure is to seek to ensure community input in the process. We're working on a method that would provide much more input than the ballot measure could."

Although nothing is on paper yet, the plan is to run the development through a process similar to

what any development would go through in the city.

Reed said discussions have focused on an ad hoc committee composed of city planners and commissioners to review the university's plans. He said he has been working for a year to develop such town-gown cooperation on the proposal.

Just how much power the city would have in the bargain — whether it could demand, require or request changes in the plan — has not been worked out, the two men say.

"I'm trying to shift people off the question of whether the city can or can't deny the project," Van Allen says, "to using the city planning process to identify and address the real issues," the impacts of traffic, and of providing water and sewer lines to the campus.

Van Allen said a satisfactory offer would give the city final approval of the environmental impact report on the project. It would not give the city authority over such matters as building permits.

"The idea is to have a process that will assure the community there will be adequate opportunity to

examine the impacts and to discuss ways of mitigating those impacts," said Van Allen.

Reed said there is no quid pro quo, that it is not a situation of either the university enters into the planning process or the SCAN measure goes on the ballot.

Reed said there is a "fine line," but "if the ultimate question is power, I don't think we're compromising in any way the independence of the university" by working with the city's officials.

"We're willing to give a little ground," he said.

Allen and Reed are planning to meet again Monday.

And if the two do reach agreement, Van Allen says, "I'm still going to have to sell it to my council."

Some members are still waiting to be convinced, he says. "I'm going to need enough to reassure enough council members that a ballot measure isn't necessary."

SCAN representatives could not be reached for comment Saturday.