

UCSC expansion plan unveiled

growth
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SANTA CRUZ — Plans to add four to seven new colleges to UC Santa Cruz to accommodate a doubling of the student population within 20 years has raised anew concerns about traffic, housing and environmental impacts.

The concerns were aired Wednesday during separate meetings on and off campus.

The plans are part of a major reconfiguration at UCSC that is the second stage of the university's 20-year plan, which detailed the academic direction the school would like to follow.

The shift is expected to include increasing professional school and graduate student enrollments, but retaining the undergraduate and liberal arts character of the campus, university officials have stated.

In order to accommodate the ultimate student population goal of 15,000, the university in March began planning the future physical make-up of the campus.

Wednesday was the first time the

preliminary plans were presented publicly and it marked the start of a series of public meetings on the matter scheduled through the rest of the year.

The plans will be completed during the summer and a final report will be issued in December. A separate environmental impact report on the proposed changes is also being conducted and should be ready at about the same time.

The changes contemplated include further developing the center of campus, adding roads to improve pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and building a "front door" to the school that would serve as a formal entrance.

The latter proposal, however, would require a controversial eastern access road which has been talked about for years but which has run into considerable political and community opposition.

Barbara Maloney, representing the firm of Wallace, Roberts & Todd, said the consulting and planning company is aware the concept of an

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eastern road is controversial, but she said it has been talked about and might be built within the next 20 years.

Left unanswered during the presentation, to the consternation of city and county residents and officials, were questions dealing with housing on and off campus and the impact such increases would have on the surrounding communities.

"All of your maps stop at the campus edge and are based on assumptions that fail to address the campus-community relationship," said Peter Katzlberger, Santa Cruz planning director, during an evening meeting at Santa Cruz High.

Katzlberger said, and university officials acknowledged, that these preliminary plans do not address housing concerns and the impact an increase of 7,500 students would have on a tight local rental market.

Wendall Brase, UCSC vice chancellor for finance, said the school has traditionally had trouble housing 50 percent of its students on campus because many of them prefer to live in the city. He said the school is looking into ways to attract students back to campus, including building new types of housing. No specific programs, however, are under way to build additional student housing in any of the plans displayed Wednesday.

Katzlberger also noted that the

school in its planning had seemingly decided to close off certain areas of the campus, such as the great meadow, from development simply because "they look nice" and not because they are bad building sites.

Another city resident asked Brase if the school had definitely decided against a controversial research and development park and whether the school was leaving land open for that in future building plans.

Brase did not give a yes or no answer to the question, instead answering that the R&D park "is on the back burner" and not contemplated for the immediate future. He said, however, the university is leaving some land undeveloped "for future contingencies," but said they could include more housing units or future college sites.

The audience of about two dozen people also questioned the university's assumption that it has to grow to 15,000 students within the next 20 years.

Brase and other school officials defended that position, saying the school was simply trying to fill out its academic curriculum in certain areas in order to continue to receive University of California funding.

He said that if the school did not grow it would go into a decline and would run the risk of losing both faculty and students, which would deteriorate the quality of the institution.