



January 14, 2010

Mr. Ken Thomas
City of Santa Cruz
Planning and Community Development Department
809 Center Street, Room 107
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Report, City of Santa Sphere of Influence
Amendment and Provision of Extraterritorial Water & Sewer Service
State Clearinghouse #2008102108

Dear Mr. Thomas:

Thank you for providing Santa Cruz LAFCO with the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the City of Santa Cruz Sphere of Influence Amendment (To Include Part of the UCSC North Campus) and Provision of Extraterritorial Water & Sewer Service (To Part of the UCSC North Campus). I am forwarding LAFCO's comments.

In general, the DEIR is an informative document that will be helpful to LAFCO when it reviews two pending applications:

- LAFCO Application No. 928, filed by the City of Santa Cruz to expand its Sphere of Influence to include approximately 374 acres designated as the "North Campus", and
- LAFCO Application No. 929, filed by the University of California, authorizing the City of Santa Cruz to provide water and sanitary sewer services outside its city limits to parts of the UCSC North Campus.

LAFCO offers the following comments to improve the clarity of the document and to assure that a range of alternatives and mitigations are included in the Final Environmental Impact Report. LAFCO's comments will build upon the comments it submitted in its December 1, 2008 letter responding to the City's Notice of Preparation. LAFCO's first four comments revisit and expand upon comments from the December 1, 2008 letter.

1. Annexation of existing residential halls

The County Elections Office reports that the City boundary bisects student residential buildings at the northern tips of the Crown/Merrill Apartments and College 9. This requires extra work for the Elections Office to split each residential complex into different voting precincts. It also inconveniences the voters who are separated from the rest of the UC precincts. The draft EIR should identify and evaluate one alternative of

annexing the existing residential buildings. LAFCO does not know of any environmental issues associated with this alternative. (Also see Comment 5, which raises the potential for annexing the entire development footprint of the North Campus).

2. Drought mitigations

As recognized in the Notice of Preparation and throughout the DEIR, the City of Santa Cruz has a water supply problem during droughts. The DEIR includes a Water Supply Assessment and discusses water supply impacts in Chapter 4.1. LAFCO requests that the FEIR assess two or more potential additional mitigations: one concerning a limit on enrollment growth during any period of water connection moratorium, and one or more mitigations that would prevent increases in off-campus water demand generated by UCSC growth.

3. Coolidge Drive

Coolidge Drive, the road that runs from the main entrance on High Street up the east side of the campus is currently a County-maintained road. Since Coolidge Drive solely serves the University, and almost all of the drive is located beyond the UCSC guard station, another potential alternative to consider is that the University take over maintenance of Coolidge Drive.

4. Forest loss

The DEIR discusses forest resources on pages 5-31 and 5-32 and identifies removal of 73 acres of forest as one of the outcomes of City services being extended to the North Campus and the LRDP being implemented. Citing the amount of forested land in the Santa Cruz Mountains and the State of California, the DEIR concludes that the conversion of 73 acres of forest at UCSC would not have a significant impact. The FEIR should reconsider this determination and identify forest conversion as a significant impact.

5. North Campus annexation

The FEIR should contain an alternative examining the environmental issues for the development footprint (DEIR page 8-18) of the North Campus to be annexed rather than provided with two City services--water and sewer. Santa Cruz LAFCO's extraterritorial service policies, as amended through LAFCO Resolution No. 2007-1, prefer that agency services be expanded by annexation rather than extraterritorial services from an agency. There are limited exceptions to this preference as stated in Santa Cruz LAFCO's policy:

"The [State LAFCO act] and this Commission's adopted policies to implement that act stress the primacy of spheres of influence in coordinating services and protecting resources. Therefore, the Commission intends to reinforce that the standard manner in which services will be extended is by annexation (and sphere of influence amendment, if necessary). The Commission shall limit its extraterritorial service authorizations to public health emergencies and circumstances where:

- a) Facilities are already in place, and
- b) Annexation would not be practical, and
- c) Extraterritorial service is determined by the Commission to be consistent with the policies adopted in and pursuant to the [State LAFCO act]."

LAFCO requests that an alternative of annexing the North Campus development footprint (as shown on Figure 18 on page 8-18) be included in the Final EIR. LAFCO is not aware of any environmental issue associated with this alternative that is not already analyzed in the DEIR. LAFCO staff is available to consult with the City's environmental consultant concerning adding this alternative into the EIR.

LAFCO understands the context in which the University is applying for extra-territorial water and sewer services. LAFCO's request to include this alternative is made to assure that the FEIR will be complete and usable by LAFCO. During LAFCO's public hearings, LAFCO will be open-minded to the University's, the City's, and the community's inputs regarding application of LAFCO's policies to the question of new development areas on the campus being served by annexation or extraterritorial services.

6. Factors in LAFCO law

On page 4.3-6, the DEIR lists the factors that state law requires each LAFCO to consider when reviewing an annexation or other change of municipal boundaries. LAFCO offers two clarifications. (1) These factors apply to annexations--not to sphere amendments or extraterritorial service authorizations. (2) Effective January 1, 2010, Senate Bill 215 (Chapter 570 of the Statutes of 2009) adds adopted regional transportation plans to the factors that LAFCO must consider.

7. Clarification of Estimated Water Use

On page 4.1-32 and elsewhere in the DEIR, the water demand figures for incremental new UCSC growth through 2020 are significantly less (100 vs. 152 million gallons per year) than the figure contained in the University's LAFCO Application No. 929 for extraterritorial services. Please clarify.

8. Housing forecast

On page 5.15, Table 3-5 apparently has some incorrect figures for the number of housing units AMBAG forecasts for the City of Santa Cruz in 2025 and 2030.

9. Modified Sphere of Influence Amendment Area

LAFCO concurs that, for the purpose of CEQA compliance, Alternative 2, the Modified Sphere of Influence Amendment Area, as discussed on pages 6-36 and 6-37 and as mapped on page 8-18, is the environmentally superior alternative. It proposes a smaller sphere amendment by excluding the campus "Protected Landscape" around the west, north, and east margins of the North Campus. Alternative 2 would add to the City's sphere all lands planned for development in the 2005 Long Range Development Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Impact Report. Please contact LAFCO staff at 454-2055 or pat@santacruzlafco.org if you have any questions about LAFCO's comments.

Very truly yours,
original signed

Patrick M. McCormick
Executive Officer
Santa Cruz LAFCO

cc: Richard Wilson, Santa Cruz City Manager
Thomas Vani, UCSC Chancellor's Office
Carole Rossi, UCSC Chancellor's Office

Figure 18, Alternative 2, Modified Sphere of Influence:
<http://santacruzlafco.org/pages/agenda/20100203materials/AlternativeMap.pdf>