

UCSD - From Good Citizen to Greedy Monster

Did you know that UCSD is planning to construct at least six tall structures on the 10.9 acre parking lot adjacent to the La Jolla Playhouse? Yes, these buildings will range from 9 to 21 stories high on the current 850-space lot at Torrey Pines Road and La Jolla Village Drive. The massive plans were unveiled at an Open House for the Future College Living and Learning Neighborhood hosted by UCSD on January 22. The audience's reaction to this new college, which will house approximately 2,000 undergraduate students, was surprise, shock and displeasure.

Let me put the height of the tallest building in perspective - there are NO, I repeat – NO buildings in La Jolla that are 21 stories tall. 939 Coast Boulevard is 18 stories. You have to go east of Hwy 5 to find 21 stories at the Pacific Regent. Even the Hyatt Aventine is only 16 stories.

In addition, the top of the 21-story building is a Conference Center, with a ground level Market Plaza of shops and restaurants which will be open to the public. Could some of the 21 stories house hotel-like rooms for the Conference Center programs? All this and just 1,200 underground parking spaces to serve increased activity in the new buildings and the La Jolla Playhouse Theater District! This means only 350 additional parking spaces for faculty, staff, students, conference goers, maintenance workers, retail and restaurant employees. Where will they all park?

Traffic, Traffic, Traffic!! La Jolla Village Drive is already overloaded. Even the fancy “sync lights” proposed cannot “flow traffic” if it is bumper-to-bumper! The location does not have the infrastructure to handle this. I mentioned this project to the SDPD, Lifeguards and SDFD, and they knew nothing about it. All were surprised and concerned that 1st responders were not in the loop on this major development which they would be expected to service.

UCSD presenters at the Open House were asked when they were going to stop building and expanding. NO ANSWER! ALARM BELLS - you see, this is a “tip of the iceberg.” There are discussions about two or more buildings by Allen Field and the J. Craig Venter Institute on the opposite corner of Torrey Pines Road and La Jolla Village Drive. There are also plans to raze the married students housing on upper La Jolla Shores Drive and replace with high-rise buildings, and for high-density buildings on North Torrey Pines Road at the Campus soccer fields. Is there no end in sight?

In the beginning, UCSD stated they wanted to be a part of the Community to fit in and to enhance La Jolla. Now their goal seems to be how dense can this area become for UCSD's benefit! In October, La Jolla Shores Association (LJSA) asked UCSD about the scope of this project and was told it “was in the initial thought stages.” The LJSA asked UCSD to relocate this project to another area of Campus to minimize the myriad adverse impacts on the Community. After stating they were open to discussions, they never returned phone calls to meet. Just three months later, UCSD dropped this fully fleshed out plan, and only then sought Community input. How important will this Community input be if their timeline is to have all approvals by July and to start construction in September 2020?

UCSD's Long Range Development Plan, adopted in November 2018, states that, “UC chose to establish a comprehensive campus in San Diego is due in no small part to the involvement, enthusiasm, and commitment of the community. Accordingly, UC San Diego strives to maintain a positive and productive relationship with area residents, officials, and agencies.” For all who are

concerned about the overgrowth in La Jolla impacting our beaches and increasing traffic and congestion, you need to stand up now. The call to action is to demand that UCSD truly work in total transparency and cooperation with our Community on this and all such future projects. Voice your concerns and ask questions about this development by contacting UCSD Campus Planning Director Robert Clossin at rclossin@ucsd.edu.

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