

Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood Frequently Asked Questions

What factors are driving university growth?

Everything UC San Diego does is motivated by its academic and research mission, with a specific focus on meeting the needs of our students. In an effort to increase access to the university for California residents, UC San Diego enrollments have continued to rise. In recent years, the student enrollment has grown so that each college accommodates over 5,000 students. This unprecedented growth has created a need for the campus to provide additional infrastructure and facilities with student housing being a key component for a positive living-learning environment for our student communities.

With this in mind, the university updated its [Long Range Development Plan \(LRDP\)](#) in 2018. The 2018 LRDP guides the physical development of the campus to support the university's teaching, research and public service mission over the next 15-20 years. The plan considers academic, enrichment, sustainability and growth goals, striving to use the land we have as effectively and efficiently as possible.

In support of the 2018 LRDP, the Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood will provide housing to 2,000 undergraduate students and help the university refine the college program by reducing the population of each college from 5,000 to approximately 4,000 students. This will ensure that our students will continue to benefit from a world-class education in the smaller, more intimate environment offered by UC San Diego's college system.

Why is the university continuing to expand development on its campus in lieu of developing housing off campus or building a satellite campus?

On-campus housing provides many benefits by expanding opportunities for students to fully integrate into the academic and social life of the campus. Part of the attraction is the on-campus community and setting, as well as being close to academic, research, social support and recreation facilities. The overall approach of the living and learning neighborhoods is to enhance the student experience, cultivate community and support interdisciplinary research.

While there will still be students who choose to live off campus, the on-campus environment will continue to be a draw for students. UC San Diego's goal is to be able to address affordability by providing housing for students at below market rates.

All five buildings in the Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood primarily provide student housing, which represents 89% of the project's building square footage. Increasing student housing on campus decreases the number of students who commute, which lessens local and regional traffic congestion and associated greenhouse gas emissions, and reduces on-campus parking demands.

How was the community involved in your planning process?

The university values community input and has fostered two-way communication through several

different channels over the years:

- The university meets on a monthly basis with five different La Jolla and University City community groups, including the La Jolla Community Planning Association, La Jolla Shores Association, La Jolla Town Council, University Community Planning Group and University City Community Association.
- In collaboration with local community groups, UC San Diego formed a Community Advisory Group in 2016 to seek input during the development of the 2018 Long Range Development Plan (2018 LRDP). This group, comprised of representatives from the five community groups in La Jolla and University City as well as planning representatives from the City of San Diego, students and staff, convened during the development of the 2018 LRDP more than a dozen times since its formation.
- The campus regularly shares information by meeting with homeowners' associations, hosting open houses on and off campus, hosting campus tours, maintaining a comprehensive website with project information, electronically distributing monthly community updates to community members and interested stakeholders, responding to calls for information and presentations, mailing campus informational postcards to local residents and presenting to civic groups such as the Rotary, Kiwanis and others.
- The campus collaborates with the local community and is actively participating in the City of San Diego [University Community Plan update](#) process.
- The university continues to collaborate with the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) as evidenced in the right-of-way contributions to SANDAG for the Mid-Coast Trolley project as well as investments to the Gilman Transit Center and associated public realm enhancements.
- The campus complies with California Environmental Quality Act public disclosure requirements on all projects, and as part of that, a comprehensive Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared and socialized widely for the 2018 LRDP.
- The university conducts ongoing meetings with La Jolla Playhouse leadership and other Theatre District stakeholders to share preliminary designs, consider their input and provide regular updates.
- UC San Diego is supporting the effort to convene a stakeholder group with representation from the local community, city, coastal commission and others to discuss residential parking regulations that would help ease parking impacts in the adjacent community.

As a result of our continual outreach to the community, several design features incorporated into the Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood are a direct outcome of community input:

- Incorporating open spaces into the design of the project, which not only provides valuable open space for residents but also provides visual relief of the development when viewed from North Torrey Pines Road.
- Adding approximately 325 parking spaces in excess to the number of spaces existing on the site prior to the project, to support the on- and off-campus community, La Jolla Playhouse patrons and other visitors.

- Placing the highest points of the buildings furthest from the community edge and orienting buildings on an east/west axis with the slender profile of buildings along the public edge to reduce scale and mass.
- Designing the project with an outward orientation and focus on community benefits, including neighborhood-scale retail and dining options for the local community.
- Incorporating pedestrian paths, sidewalks and other connections from the proposed underground parking structure to connect directly to the La Jolla Playhouse.
- Expanding the campus' adaptive traffic signal control ("smart signal") technology program to the intersections along North Torrey Pines Road to ease the flow of traffic.

Are there any amenities for the community in the project?

The campus continually pursues ways to provide community benefit in its projects. The living and learning neighborhood is adjacent to UC San Diego's Joan and Irwin Jacobs Theatre District, which is home to multiple performance spaces used by both the Department of Theatre and Dance and La Jolla Playhouse. A key goal of the project is to improve the visitor experience for theatre patrons and highlight UC San Diego's arts presence in the community.

The Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood will provide new dining options, proximate parking, a significant amount of open space and outdoor gathering areas, as well as an enhanced theatre patron valet/drop-off area.

The project will also benefit the community through the provision of 370 construction jobs for three years and 80 permanent jobs related to the academic and residential program. An additional 50-60 retail, dining and restaurant positions will be provided and are expected to be filled by UC San Diego students.

What is the timeline of this project?

The project was approved by the UC Regents in November 2020. Construction began in January 2021 and is expected to be complete in fall 2023.

Will development impact existing open spaces or reduce open space on campus?

The project will redevelop two surface parking lots (approximately six acres) to better utilize the site, while providing new open space amenities. The neighborhood design, which was recognized by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) San Diego with a 2020 Design Award, provides open space for passive recreation and contemplation, visual relief between the buildings and natural landscape elements. The mature eucalyptus groves adjacent to the Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood will also be preserved to the maximum extent feasible.

Is the Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood a "green" project?

The university follows the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) [Green Building Rating System](#), which provides a framework for healthy, highly efficient and cost-saving green buildings. The project is expected to meet a minimum LEED Silver rating, with a target of LEED Gold, and includes the following sustainable features:

- The majority of students living in Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood will not have a car; 1,200 storage spaces for bikes, skateboards

and scooters will help connect students to the rest of the campus and mass transportation options.

- The project’s landscaping includes low-water plant species and incorporates systems to filter and capture storm water. Outdoor water use is also reduced through the use of reclaimed irrigation water provided via a connection to the City of San Diego’s reclaimed water system. Indoor water use is reduced through low-flow fixtures in kitchens and bathrooms and water saving appliances.
- Optimized facade and window insulation will reduce the need for heating and cooling systems. The electricity provided for the project is carbon-free, via the [UC Regents Energy Services Unit Direct Access Program](#).
- Recycled materials and materials from regional sources will be utilized where possible. In addition, off-site methods of construction are utilized for some building components in order to decrease construction waste.

What impact will this growth have on traffic in the area; has this been studied?

A comprehensive traffic impact analysis was prepared for the 2018 LRDP and its Environmental Impact Report ([LRDP EIR](#)) in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This included both a Level of Service (LOS) analysis, which measures traffic congestion in terms of roadway capacity, and a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), which focuses on the number and length of vehicle trips made by a project’s employees and residents. VMT is the statewide standard performance metric for analyzing transportation impacts in CEQA documents.

The LOS analysis assessed the traffic impacts of the development expected under the 2018 LRDP looking at existing conditions, future year 2025 conditions and future year 2035 conditions, including both the campus’ projected growth as well as surrounding growth. Planned projects that were anticipated to be built by the year 2025 in the 2018 LRDP (including this project) were accounted for in the 2018 LRDP traffic analysis in the “Year 2025” conditions. As a mitigation for its LOS impacts identified in the 2018 LRDP, the university will install “smart signals” along La Jolla Village Drive, from Interstate-805 to North Torrey Pines Road and along Regents Road. Smart signals improve traffic flow by using sensors and artificial intelligence to adjust signal timing based on actual demand, making real-time changes to reduce the amount of time cars spend idling (resulting in reduced carbon emissions) at red lights. As an added community benefit, the university has also committed to installing signals along North Torrey Pines Road to the Genesee intersection. In total, the university will install 26 smart signals and will have invested over \$2 million in this solution to improve the flow of traffic.

The LRDP EIR VMT analysis used a multi-tiered approach to assessing the LRDP’s potential impacts. The LRDP EIR concluded that there would be no significant impacts associated with VMT because the campus’ per capita, resident and employee VMT numbers are significantly lower than both the regional and City of San Diego averages. In addition, much of the campus lies within a Transit Priority Area (within one-half mile of a major transit station) and is well-served by existing bus lines and the future UC San Diego Blue Line Trolley extension. The LRDP’s transit-oriented development places a mix of uses and increased housing in areas well served by alternative transportation and transit systems, both of which result in a reduction in VMT and greenhouse gas emissions.

In accordance with updated CEQA Guidelines and Senate Bill 743, a VMT analysis was conducted to determine the project's consistency with the LRDP EIR's VMT Analysis.

As outlined in the project-level consistency analysis (provided in the Addendum to the 2018 LRDP EIR), the project is consistent with the overall campus VMT averages. This is largely due to the fact that the addition of the college and associated population were accounted for in the LRDP's VMT analysis.

Placing housing on campus reduces VMT because students living on campus no longer have to commute to campus by car. In addition, the large majority of students living in the neighborhood will not have a car, as the campus has parking restrictions in place for first- and second-year students.

The campus has invested in walkways, paths, bike lanes, pedestrian bridges and other connections, as well as bike- and scooter-share programs, that together embrace a micromobility approach to travel rather than the past auto centric options. Pedestrian and bike-friendly pathways incorporated with this project will continue to enhance and encourage the movement of people and bikes through the campus core rather than on the surrounding streets. The two campus trolley stations associated with the UC San Diego Blue Line extension will also reduce VMT by reducing the number of students, staff and faculty traveling to campus by car.

Did the campus perform an environmental analysis of the project?

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) completed for the 2018 LRDP analyzed future growth anticipated on the campus. The 2018 LRDP EIR addressed the potential environmental effects of campus growth and development discussed in the 2018 LRDP, as well as the addition of two new colleges and expansion of on-campus student housing, which includes the proposed project. An Addendum to the 2018 LRDP Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared to document the project's consistency with the EIR analysis and provide project-specific details. The Addendum was approved by the UC Regents and is posted on the [PlanDesignBuild website](#) under the [Environmental Planning tab](#).

Will the growth of the university present problems for emergency access?

Safety is the university's top concern. The University of California has strict safety standards and regulations. The new buildings and parking structure are designed with occupancy in mind to maximize safety and ease evacuation.

The UC San Diego Police Department and Campus Fire Marshal work closely with partner agencies responsible for public safety, including the City of San Diego. As just one example, UC San Diego has provided the city with the land and approximately \$21 million in funding to build a fire station on campus.

In addition, the implementation of adaptive traffic signal controls along peripheral campus roadways will ease congestion and improve traffic flow, which in turn will improve emergency access on adjacent roadways. For additional information on community contributions, visit <https://rmp.ucsd.edu/about/community.html>.

Why does the project design include high-rise buildings?

The project was designed to provide a sense of community around a significant amount of open space with the lower 9- to 11-story buildings along the campus edge, such as the tallest of the Keeling Apartments (10 stories) located immediately north of the site. Building heights and siting are influenced by maximizing natural light, ventilation requirements, site access and servicing needs and minimizing shadow effects. The taller buildings are located at the interior of the site to the east, and are necessary to accommodate student housing while increasing the amount of shared open areas.

Why is the university planning a meeting center at this location?

A meeting center is planned for the top of an 11-story building that would have retail at the ground floor and student housing in the levels above. The meeting center would accommodate university meetings and academic and campus community events. This would operate similarly to the meeting center at Seventh College West, which serves primarily UC San Diego constituents. In addition, four executive support spaces would also be available for short-term stays by visiting professors and other UC San Diego affiliates. Campus event protocols would be strictly followed to minimize any community impacts.

What can the community expect during construction?

Every effort will be made to minimize construction impacts to the on- and off-campus community whenever possible. One innovative approach to reduce construction impacts is prefabricating interior and exterior wall panels, which reduces on-site noise, traffic and parking, while also reducing waste and improving quality and safety.

Additional measures to minimize construction impacts include, but are not limited to:

- Obtaining the cleanest construction equipment available and feasible
- Deploying dust control measures, such as wetting down dirt surfaces and soil stockpiles, cleaning truck tires before leaving the site to prevent dirt from being tracked onto the street, as well as regular street sweeping
- Following construction noise level requirements similar to the City of San Diego's construction requirements and installing acoustical mitigation blankets on fencing near resident halls
- Outfitting equipment with manufacturer-approved sound abatement measures
- Limiting work hours to 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., except when absolutely necessary to reduce impacts to traffic, emergency and health operations
- Limiting work hours to 9 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. during UC San Diego finals week

How will construction impact campus parking?

The Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood is being built on what was formerly parking lots P102 and P103. The new Scholars Parking Structure at the adjacent North Torrey Pines Living and Learning Neighborhood provides approximately 1,200 parking spaces. The Osler Parking Structure, east of the site, provides 1,350 parking spaces nearby. When the Theatre District Living and Learning Neighborhood opens in fall 2023, it will provide an additional 1,165 parking spaces, or an approximately 30% increase in onsite parking from the previously existing site condition. The added capacity will address existing and projected demands for parking in this area

of the campus, including parking for La Jolla Playhouse events.

How will parking be accommodated for La Jolla Playhouse during construction?

UC San Diego continues to work closely with La Jolla Playhouse during the development of this project to ensure that the parking and access needs of theatre patrons are accommodated during construction and beyond. In addition to expanded valet service at La Jolla Playhouse, theatregoers will be provided with shuttle service from the nearby Osler Parking Structure to the Playhouse during performances.

Will any streets be closed during construction?

Portions of Revelle College Drive and Scholars Drive will periodically close during work to enhance the campus entry at UC San Diego's Joan and Irwin Jacobs Theatre District. Alternative access routes to all buildings will be provided for students, faculty, staff, visitors, deliveries and emergency vehicles.

Where can I get more information?

In addition to sharing information at community meetings and open houses, the university maintains comprehensive websites with project information. Please refer to the PlanDesignBuild.ucsd.edu website for detailed information on the project, as well as information on other current construction projects that are enabling UC San Diego's physical, cultural and intellectual transformation.

The project site, pedestrian pathways, bike routes, shuttle routes and alternate parking can be viewed in this [interactive campus map](#).