

ALBANY CALIFORNIA

CITY OF ALBANY



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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April 21, 2021

UC Berkeley, Physical & Environmental Planning
Attention: 2021 LRDP and Housing Projects #1 and #2 Draft EIR
300 A&E Building
Berkeley, CA 94720-1382

Subject: Draft EIR Comments: 2021 LRDP and Housing Projects #1 and #2

I am writing on behalf of the City of Albany to provide comments on the draft environmental impact report for the UC Berkeley Long Range Development Plan. We appreciate the challenges that UC Berkeley faces in achieving your mission to continue to be a premiere public university. The City of Albany looks forward to supporting and collaborating with the campus in the implementation of the LRDP. We do, however, have comments on the DEIR document that we believe should be addressed in the Final EIR

1. We would like to note for the record that the City of Albany is not listed as a responsible agency associated with the implementation of the LRDP. Thus, actions required by the City of Albany, if any, will be subject to the appropriate subsequent CEQA review.
2. The DEIR states that the LRDP does not address direct impacts of projects in Albany because “they are sufficiently distant from the Campus Park and its environs . . .,” without providing any objective analysis to support the “sufficiently distant” conclusion. Campus facilities in Albany are less than 3 miles from the central campus and include CNR research facilities that are used daily by faculty, students, and staff based on the central campus. In addition, currently in Albany, housing for more than 950 students are provided, and is expected to increase by another 825 students during the LRDP planning period.
3. The description in Table 5-3 of the proposed Albany Village Graduate Student Housing Project (700 bedrooms and 275 parking spaces) is inconsistent with the project description provided by the campus in the CEQA Addendum released in March 2021 (825 beds and 240 parking spaces).

4. The DEIR states “The anticipated indirect population growth in the cities of Oakland, Albany, El Cerrito, Richmond, and San Francisco would be negligible when compared to the overall population growth anticipated in those jurisdictions by the 2036–37 school year.²⁴” Footnote 24 on page 5.12-22 states “a population growth of 327 in Albany, which is less than 2 percent of Albany’s population increase of 19,215.” This conclusion is in error, and in particular, Albany’s total population is 19,215. For the City of Albany, indirect population growth of 327 created by the LRDP is a significant portion of future growth, and should not be considered negligible.
5. The DEIR states that EBMUD supplies recycled water to “customers in the cities of Alameda, Richmond, San Ramon, Oakland, and Albany, with plans to expand to 20 MGD by 2040.” This is in error. EBMUD does not currently provide recycled water to customers in Albany, and it is our understanding that due to gaps in the transmission infrastructure, there is no plan to provide recycled water to Albany in the near future.
6. The DEIR discusses a variety of energy, greenhouse gas, and transportation policies and programs that taken together are important to the City of Albany in our efforts to achieve our climate action and adaptation plan goals. In particular, elimination of the use of natural gas in buildings and the implementation of modes of transportation that are effective alternatives to the use of gasoline-powered automobiles is critical. We would like assurance that these programs and policies will be applied to campus facilities in Albany.
7. The LRDP EIR includes projects in Berkeley, which will be subject to more contemporary mitigation measures than will applied to similar proposed projects in the City of Albany developed on the same timeline. We request that the more rigorous measures contained in the LRDP EIR, as well as any relevant programs that are part of CEQA-related agreements with other public agencies, be implemented as part of any project in Albany.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. I can be reached at jbond@albanvca.org or at 510-528-5769.

Regards,



Jeff Bond
Community Development Director

cc: City Manager