



# San Francisco Planning

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September 11, 2020

Diane Wong  
UCSF Real Estate - Campus Planning  
654 Minnesota Street  
San Francisco, CA 94143

**Re: City and County of San Francisco Comment Letter on the Comprehensive Parnassus Heights Plan DEIR**

Dear Ms. Wong,

The City and County of San Francisco (City) appreciates the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and the Regents of the University of California (Regents) for their ongoing contributions to San Francisco and for engaging the City and San Francisco community in the planning process for the Comprehensive Parnassus Heights Plan (the plan). As a municipal and responsible agency, the City is interested in working with UCSF and the Regents to mitigate environmental impacts from implementation of the plan and address the City and its residents' concerns.

It is in that spirit that the City submits these comments on the plan's Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). These comments reflect combined comments from the San Francisco Planning Department, San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC), the Office of Economic and Workforce Development and the Recreation and Parks Department.

The City recognizes the need to upgrade and modernize older medical facilities as well as the services and benefits that UCSF provides to the City and the residents of San Francisco and welcomes this opportunity to help plan for the Parnassus campus's future needs. The City is particularly supportive of UCSF's plan to add new on-campus housing and to redesign and reorient public spaces to improve pedestrian access and integrate the campus with the surrounding neighborhood and open spaces.

At the same time, the plan represents a substantial increase to the existing development at Parnassus Heights (greater than 50 percent increase in gross floor area), and the City is concerned about the plan's impacts on Muni, important cultural resources, San Francisco's job-housing balance, downstream stormwater and wastewater systems, and recreational facilities. The City has shared many of these concerns with UCSF previously. We are optimistic that UCSF can ameliorate these impacts through mitigation measures and other commitments, including a memorandum of understanding between the City and UCSF. We look forward to continued collaboration for decades to come.

## **Cultural Resources**

### ***The History of Medicine in California Frescos (Zakheim Murals)***

UCSF can advance its educational mission while also protecting cultural resources that have significance to the broader community. Amongst the cultural resources on the UCSF campus, the History of Medicine in California frescos by renowned 20th Century Jewish artist Bernard Zakheim (Zakheim murals) are particularly noteworthy. The murals depict vivid images of doctors, lab scientists, and suffering and recovered patients throughout California's medical history, including a central depiction of Bidy Mason, a Black mid-wife from the late 1800's who was born as an enslaved person but who died as an influential and prominent citizen of Los Angeles. The murals were completed in 1938 as part of the Federal Art Project, a New Deal program designed to employ artists and fund visual art in the United States.

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors has taken steps to designate the Zakheim murals as a local historic landmark. In Resolution No. 355-20, effective July 31, 2020, the Board unanimously resolved to initiate Landmark Designation of the murals. On August 19, 2020 the city's Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to recommend that the Board approve the Landmark Designation of the murals. We anticipate that the Board will finalize the Landmark Designation by mid-December. The DEIR should be updated to note these developments.

The baseline approved condition for the campus is the retention of UC Hall for conversion to residential use under the 2014 Long Range Development Plan. The DEIR states that "UCSF has determined that it will not attempt to remove the Zakheim murals." However, such a determination cannot be made prior to a full evaluation under CEQA of the changes to baseline conditions. We are concerned that UCSF has prematurely decided the outcome for the murals and effectively limited the DEIR's responsibility under CEQA to identify ways to preserve these historic resources.

The DEIR identifies a significant and unavoidable impact to the murals due to the demolition of UC Hall. The DEIR states that no feasible mitigations are available to reduce this impact to less than significant. However, the DEIR provides no evidence to support its conclusion that the estimated \$7.6 million to preserve, remove, and relocate the mural is prohibitive, particularly in light of the overall cost of the plan. CEQA requires the DEIR to include all potentially feasible mitigation measures. A determination of actual feasibility occurs at plan adoption.

The City proposes multiple feasible ways that the murals could be preserved: through modification of the reduced project alternative and through mitigation measures. These options meet CEQA requirements and are feasible given their minimal costs compared to the substantial cost of the overall plan.

First, the DEIR must include an alternative that retains and rehabilitates UC Hall. Although the DEIR studies a reduced density alternative that adaptively reuses UC Hall and thus potentially preserves the murals, the reduced density alternative assumes preservation of multiple other buildings, includes a much smaller new hospital, and renovates Moffit Hospital, a series of proposals which are, collectively, unlikely to meet UCSF's objectives. Therefore, the DEIR should include an alternative that consists of the project with the larger hospital and only preserves UC Hall, or at least preserves Toland Hall—the section of UC Hall in which the Zakheim Murals are located—including the murals themselves. This alternative should include protection of Toland Hall during construction and the restoration of the murals using appropriate conservation treatments that ensure their historic integrity and long-term stability. This alternative should also provide public access to Toland Hall and a comprehensive interpretive program.

UCSF may not need to create a new alternative and recirculate the DEIR for public comment to address the alternative proposed above, but instead may be able to combine existing alternatives to respond to this comment in the Final EIR. However, UCSF must present such an alternative to the public and the Regents so they may make an informed decision.

Second, if UCSF’s preferred project includes demolition of UC and Toland Halls, the DEIR must include a mitigation measure requiring salvage of the murals. This mitigation measure would require UCSF to salvage all sections of the murals and require UCSF to reinstall them as a complete group in a publicly accessible location on the UCSF Parnassus Campus. The mitigation measure would also require a conservator experienced in mural conservation to work with the historical architect to develop a detailed plan for the extraction, moving, storage, reinstallation, and ongoing maintenance of the murals, as well as a comprehensive interpretive program.

In summary, UCSF must do everything it can to preserve the Zakheim murals. The alternatives and mitigation measures described above are some feasible options to preserve the murals while still allowing UCSF to meet its project objectives.

Following the publication of the DEIR, the City understands that the Regents opened a Request for Proposals for the removal, conservation, and transportation of the murals to an off-site storage facility to preserve the murals. However, the City strongly prefers that the murals not only be preserved but that they remain publicly displayed for all to enjoy. We look forward to working with UCSF to preserve this invaluable cultural resource.

**Other Cultural Resource Comments**

The following includes additional comments and recommendations on the DEIR cultural resources section.

Page #	Comments and Recommendations
4.4-19	<b>MM CUL-1a.</b> The DEIR should have established character defining features of known historical resources prior to identifying impacts and determining mitigation. The comments and responses document should identify character-defining features of historic properties under the California Register criteria instead of deferring this to future mitigation, except as it relates to CUL-2.
4.4-22	<b>Impact CUL-2.</b> The City recommends modifying mitigation measure CUL-1a to state that prior to the demolition of one of the age-eligible buildings, a qualified professional would evaluate the building for eligibility and, if it is determined to be eligible, the remainder of mitigation measure CUL-1a and mitigation measures CUL-1b and -1c shall apply.
4.4-23	<b>Impact CUL-3.</b> The Planning Department’s GIS prehistoric archeological modeling assesses the central portion of the main campus (approximately where the UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Health Sciences West are) as moderately sensitive for buried and surface prehistoric resources, not low sensitivity as stated in the DEIR. The Planning Department’s assessment is based on topography and slope, distance from water sources and other factors. The area designated as moderately sensitive in our model is much less steep than the rest of the project area and is the location of most of the proposed development. As we have seen demonstrated on numerous projects in San Francisco, past disturbance from use and development does not necessarily equate with destruction of all potential resources. The presence of potential resources depends on the extent of grading, mass excavation and soil improvement associated with the existing and prior development and the nature of ground disturbance for the proposed project. Pockets of significant archaeological deposits may survive even in areas where substantial prior ground disturbance has taken place.

Thus, please amend the mitigation measure to require (1) increased awareness training for the more sensitive areas, and (2) inspection of the site by an archaeologist after each demolition or during site grading and prior to new construction, especially in areas of moderate sensitivity.

**4.4-24      MM CUL-3.** The phrase "as appropriate to the discovered prehistoric resource" is unclear in the context of this statement, since it covers all resources. Thus, we suggest deleting "prehistoric."

**6-22      Reduced Project Alternative.** The City typically requires an assessment of a "full preservation" alternative that preserves all historic resources, including those significant for association with events (not just architecturally significant buildings). We also typically require that all rehabilitations conform to the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation. We recommend UCSF explain whether such an alternative was considered, but rejected, but at a minimum require all rehabilitations conform to the Secretary's Standards.

## **Transportation**

The City appreciates the decrease in the total amount of off-street parking supply compared to existing conditions, which will discourage single-occupancy vehicle trips and encourage future users to use sustainable transportation solutions, such as public transit. However, for unexplained reasons, the DEIR transportation analysis does not follow the city's Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA) Guidelines.<sup>1</sup> Most glaringly, the DEIR does not analyze the project's transit and loading impacts at all. For the reasons described below, the plan could have significant effects on the environment related to transit and loading, and the DEIR analysis of consistencies with City transportation policies is inadequate.

### **Transit**

San Francisco's Muni public transit system provides vital bus and rail service for the City, including to the Parnassus Heights campus. Today, about 32 percent of students, 17 percent of faculty, and 25 percent of residents travel to and from the campus via Muni (DEIR Table 4.15-8).

For Muni to remain an attractive transportation option for existing and future students, faculty, and residents of the campus, buses and trains serving the campus must operate effectively and people must have the opportunity to board the vehicle. This requires a combination of factors to occur, including funding to support Muni capacity expansions (e.g., increased fleet) and limiting private vehicle conflicts with Muni (i.e., delay). However, the DEIR does not assess the plan's impacts on Muni capacity or delay or consider what improvements could mitigate those impacts. As an initial matter, the San Francisco TIA Guidelines require that large projects like this identify the potential for public transit to accommodate the project's estimated transit trips and adjust estimates as needed if transit capacity is unavailable (TIA Guidelines, p. F-14). The DEIR does not include any such analysis. The DEIR assumes a 55 percent increase in daily external person trips.<sup>2</sup> The DEIR assumes a similar mode split as existing conditions under plan implementation, with 33 percent of

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<sup>1</sup> In most instances in the DEIR, UCSF uses significance criteria consistent with City guidance despite the differences between the City's guidance and the UC system overall; for instance, wind and shadow impacts are evaluated in the DEIR consistent with City guidance.

<sup>2</sup> The DEIR provides no additional details (e.g., an appendix) to allow verification of the accuracy of numerous calculations or to estimate transit trips to inform the City's planning and to allow the City to participate meaningfully in the environmental review process.

students, 15 percent of faculty, and 25 percent of residents using Muni. This is a false assumption because the DEIR does not assess the ability for Muni to meet this increased demand from the plan's increase in population in a reliable manner. As a result, the DEIR lacks substantial evidence for this assumption, and other topics that rely on this mode split assumption are also flawed (e.g., air quality, noise).<sup>3</sup>

Large development projects in San Francisco are generally subject to the Transportation Sustainability Fee and other fees and agreements to improve transit infrastructure and Muni service, which includes transit capital maintenance, expansion, and reliability. The department preliminarily estimates that if UCSF were a private developer it would owe over \$30 million in the Transportation Sustainability Fee alone based on the plan.<sup>4</sup>

UCSF will be unable to successfully execute its plan if Muni is over capacity or substantially delayed. This DEIR does not identify whether Muni can accommodate the project's estimated transit trips, nor does it address the effects of people switching modes to private vehicles, which would lead to additional air pollution and noise impacts. Furthermore, Muni cannot commit to providing an increase in service to the campus without additional funding.

Additionally, the DEIR fails to identify the transit delay impacts from the plan. As stated above, if Muni is delayed, Muni is less attractive for students, faculty, residents, visitors, and patients of the campus, and potentially makes the DEIR's future mode split assumptions flawed.

To determine transit delay impacts on individual Muni routes, the City uses a transit delay significance threshold of greater than or equal to four minutes. This threshold is based on the City Charter,<sup>5</sup> a local policy that the DEIR did not assess. The methodology assesses three sources of transit delay: general congestion at intersections ("congestion"), the additional time required for a transit vehicle to re-enter the flow of traffic ("reentry"), and increased time needed for alighting and departing a transit vehicle ("ridership"). The supplemental "informational" analysis (DEIR Appendix TRANS) shows that the project could exceed this threshold by congestion alone. Several intersections in the project area would degrade in performance from LOS B or C to LOS E or F. This includes Parnassus Avenue, which serves the 6-Parnassus and 43-Masonic Muni routes, and Irving Street, which serves the N-Judah. As for delays caused by increases in ridership, the TIA Guidelines use a factor of 2.5 seconds for boarding and alighting delay that would further result in delays to Muni service due to the several thousand net new transit trips from the project.

UCSF must revise the DEIR to include an analysis of the plan's impact on Muni service and transit delay. Without this analysis, the DEIR is inadequate and fails to inform the decision makers of the environmental consequences of the plan.

### **Loading**

The City uses the following significance criterion when assessing whether a project would have impacts related to loading: Would the project result in a loading deficit and the secondary effects would create potentially

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<sup>3</sup> The DEIR air quality and noise analysis rely on vehicle trip estimates consistent with the transportation section to estimate mobile source emissions and traffic noise. As stated here, the DEIR underestimates the plan's vehicle trips because it falsely assumes that the plan would result in similar mode splits as existing conditions.

<sup>4</sup> Calculated as different between existing conditions and plan conditions, based on numbers presented in DEIR tables 3-1 and 3-2.

<sup>5</sup> San Francisco Charter. *SEC. 8A.103(c)(1). Service Standards and Accountability.*

hazardous conditions to people walking, bicycling, or driving, or substantially delay transit? The DEIR did not assess such impacts.

As documented in the DEIR, the project is anticipated to increase p.m. peak hour passenger loading demand by 240 percent. The DEIR does not explain how or whether this loading demand would be adequately accommodated. In comparing the anticipated passenger loading demand (DEIR Table 4.15-13) with the anticipated passenger loading supply (DEIR Table 4.15-14), the data suggests that there would be a passenger loading deficit. Regarding commercial loading, there is no analysis of whether the plan would adequately accommodate its loading needs.

Under existing conditions, on-street loading in the project vicinity is impacted. SFMTA transit collision data include nine collisions in the past five years between light rail vehicles and vehicles parked and stopped in the middle of intersections near the Parnassus campus. SFMTA data also show that the N-Judah and nearby routes already experience delays at the Arguello/Carl/Irving intersection under existing conditions when trucks and private vehicles are double parked in the travel lane and obstruct light rail vehicles behind them. When travel lanes are obstructed often, buses and vehicles are forced to make maneuvers to circumvent double-parked vehicles, which in turn may lead to potentially hazardous conditions for substantial numbers of people walking, biking, and driving nearby. The DEIR acknowledges the existing loading deficit in the project vicinity but does not discuss how the project will address the project's contributions this problem. As evidenced here, without addressing the loading issues, the plan could exacerbate the number of collisions and cause additional delay to transit.

Lastly, Muni operates as a system; the impacts on one point of a route affect other parts of the route. The DEIR does not disclose the effects of Mitigation Measure AIR-2b and whether the implementation of additional shuttles and TNC subsidies will impact transit in San Francisco in areas farther out from the Parnassus campus. These shuttles and transportation network company (TNC) trips would be additional sources of delay to Muni along their routes and at their loading zones, a fact which is not disclosed or analyzed in the DEIR.

### **Next Steps**

UCSF must revise its analysis and identify and analyze mitigation measures to account for the project's transit and loading impacts. The City has significant concerns about the plan's impact on Muni, how the project's passenger and commercial loading demand will be accommodated, and how resulting secondary impacts that could occur from unmet loading demand will be addressed. Potential mitigation measures could include in-kind payment of a transportation impact fee to help offset the project's impact on Muni, and direct contributions to public right-of-way improvements to the surrounding area. Such physical improvements could include:

- Roadway infrastructure improvements to signals, bikeway improvements, or pedestrian infrastructure in the Parnassus campus vicinity;
- Improvements and/or contributions to impacted transit lines, including 6-Parnassus, 43-Masonic, and N-Judah;
- A loading plan that demonstrates how the project would fully accommodate expected growth in TNC use and growth in additional demand for other types of loading; and
- Improved TDM measures that could include public use of UCSF shuttles or an institutional transit pass program.

We look forward to working with UCSF to implement the project while supporting the surrounding neighborhood.

### **Population Growth, Jobs, and Housing**

According to the DEIR, the number of students, faculty, and staff at the campus would grow to 16,262, or an increase of 5,184 persons above existing conditions. The DEIR provides no evidence to support its assertion that this increase in jobs was “potentially accounted for” in *Plan Bay Area 2040*. This growth was not accounted for in Planning Department projections for *Plan Bay Area 2040*.

The City adopted a Jobs-Housing Nexus Study and linkage fee in 2019 that assumes that 100 percent of all new workers in new developments in San Francisco would generate demand for housing within San Francisco. Thus, the DEIR should assume students, faculty, and staff would seek housing within San Francisco, not the five-county DEIR study area.

The City supports the additional housing units that UCSF is constructing on-campus. However, there is a large deficit between the unplanned growth in the number of students, faculty, and staff that UCSF would attract to San Francisco and the amount of housing available on-campus under the plan. The plan would result in a net increase of only 762 housing units and would meet less than 20 percent of the net new housing demand UCSF is creating. This is on top of an existing unmet demand from UCSF.

This amount of unplanned growth would require unplanned transportation and utility infrastructure upgrades, which are not discussed in the DEIR. Of particular concern to the City are the project’s impacts on the City’s transportation system, combined sewer system, and recreational facilities, as documented elsewhere in this letter. UCSF must work with the City to help alleviate the effects of population growth within San Francisco.

### **Stormwater and Wastewater Utilities**

The DEIR incorrectly assumes the project is in an area of separated sanitary and storm sewers, and that compliance with State requirements for Municipal Storm Sewer Systems (MS4) is required (see DEIR page 4.9-6). As noted in the DEIR, UCSF is in fact served by the City’s combined sewer system. The Parnassus Heights Plan is wholly within the combined sewer area, not MS4. Thus, the State’s MS4 Phase II permit requirements do not apply to this project, and any DEIR text relying on that assumption should be corrected. Project demolition and construction activities should be coordinated with the SFPUC to ensure that city infrastructure can adequately accommodate the project’s stormwater and wastewater needs.

To support the DEIR’s conclusion of no hydrological impacts or cumulative utility impacts from the proposed project, the DEIR should be revised to include project compliance with the San Francisco Stormwater Management Ordinance (or LEED<sup>6</sup> 6.1). The Stormwater Management Ordinance achieves similar stormwater detention/retention improvements to those contemplated by the DEIR through MS4 compliance; those stormwater controls, in turn, have the potential to mitigate the potential effects of the increased sanitary flows.

Conformance with San Francisco Stormwater Management Requirements would typically help offset potential impacts from increased sanitary flows and changes in net impervious surfaces and modified connection points. Furthermore, these stormwater management requirements, as amended in 2016 through Board of

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<sup>6</sup> LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a green building certification program developed by the non-profit U.S. Green Building Council that is used worldwide.

Supervisor legislation, apply to State projects.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, since UCSF already states in the DEIR that the project is pursuing some elements of LEED for the development plan (e.g., energy efficiency), a documented project commitment to the stormwater control element of LEED (SSc6.1) would typically provide a similar offset to potential impacts from increased sanitary flows. UCSF must demonstrate conformance with San Francisco Stormwater Management Requirements or conformance to the stormwater control element of LEED.

In addition, for typical large projects in San Francisco, modeling of increased sewer demand is required for building permit approvals. When project sponsors propose new or replacement sewer connections, the capacity of the adjoining sewer system must be analyzed to ensure that the system can accommodate increased flows and/or modified connection points. For large projects, the project sponsor has the option of conducting the analysis on its own and providing the analysis to the SFPUC for review, or SFPUC can complete the analysis on the sponsor's behalf, subject to reimbursement. If UCSF elects to conduct the modeling and analysis on its own, the modeling must be submitted to the SFPUC Wastewater Enterprise for review and approval. In the event that the analysis finds that increased flows exceed conveyance capacity of the adjoining downstream sewer, additional mitigation would be required from the project. UCSF must work with SFPUC to perform the requisite modeling and ensure that the combined sewer system has adequate downstream capacity.

### **Next Steps**

As discussed above, UCSF must model the plan's increased sewer demand and contact the SFPUC to verify whether the combined sewer system has capacity to accommodate the proposed plan, which is substantial unplanned growth from the perspective of the SFPUC. If downstream improvements are required to help accommodate the proposed project, UCSF must contribute funds to help construct necessary utility infrastructure. All development projects in San Francisco are required to pay a wastewater capacity charge and water capacity charge to offset their impacts to the city's utility infrastructure. Such upgrades are vital to the plan's successful implementation.

In addition to serving the UCSF Parnassus campus, the combined sewer system is a critical utility that serves the greater San Francisco community. It is imperative that UCSF conform with city stormwater regulations and that it work with the City to ensure that the combined sewer system can perform effectively.

### **Recreation**

UCSF's acknowledges its policy to be "generally consistent" with applicable local plans, policies and regulations to the extent feasible. Under Section 295 of the San Francisco Planning Code, projects that are over 40 feet tall must disclose the impacts from shadows cast on Recreation and Park Department property. Although the DEIR provides shadow analyses for many surrounding parks and open spaces, the DEIR fails to provide quantitative shadow on all surrounding city open spaces and properties, including: the Garden For The Environment, White Crane Springs, and the Interior Greenbelt, which is subject to Section 295 Planning Code requirements. Consequently, further analysis is needed to determine whether the plan would adversely impact the use and enjoyment of these open spaces and properties.

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<sup>7</sup> Ordinance no. 64-16 (File no. 160155) states: Large Development Projects not subject to City building or planning approvals, including, but not limited to, State and Federal projects, must submit a Stormwater Control Plan and receive approval from the General Manager before undertaking any construction activity. For more information: <https://sfwater.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=9077>



The City is also concerned that unplanned population growth from the proposed plan would cause increased pressures on city parks and recreational facilities, especially those in the area surrounding the Parnassus campus. The plan would increase the daytime population of the campus by approximately 5,490 persons by 2030 (a 33 percent increase) and 7,850 persons by 2050 (a 45 percent increase). Daytime visitors, students, and employees would likely use nearby recreational facilities. While on-campus recreational facilities would offset some of the demand for recreation and open space, people will likely use off-campus, city-owned facilities as well. The DEIR must analyze whether the unplanned growth would adversely impact city recreational facilities.

### **Next Steps**

Large projects in the city typically pay impact fees to help the city maintain and expand recreational facilities and mitigate impacts on city facilities. Consistent with other major projects in the San Francisco, UCSF should contribute funds to help offset physical impacts on recreational facilities from UCSF users due to increased demand. Such fees would help alleviate the project's impact on recreational facilities in the city.

### **Conclusion**

The City recognizes the need to upgrade and modernize older medical and research facilities on the UCSF Parnassus Campus. We support this endeavor, but we also have concerns about the plan's impact on San Francisco, impacts which would be significant if left unaddressed. We are optimistic that our concerns about the plan's impacts to cultural resources, public transit, population growth, stormwater utilities and infrastructure, and recreation can be mitigated without hindering UCSF efforts to achieve its overall goals, and we have outlined several approaches that would alleviate these concerns. We look forward to continued engagement with UCSF and working on a mutual memorandum of understanding to plan a healthier, sustainable future for our common community.

Please contact Planning Department staff Ryan Shum ([ryan.shum@sfgov.org](mailto:ryan.shum@sfgov.org)) to discuss any comments in this letter, or Joshua Switzky ([joshua.switzky@sfgov.org](mailto:joshua.switzky@sfgov.org)) regarding the memorandum of understanding.

Sincerely,



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