




A Renewed People's Park for All


There is a great deal of misinformation about this project, especially on social media.
We want to set the record straight and present the facts about this project.

Incorrect


 *The buildings are 17 stories tall, or higher, and out-of-keeping with the area.*

 *This is luxury student housing that generates profit for a private developer/operator.*


 *Pile drivers will cause loud noises and dangerous vibrations that will severely damage nearby historic buildings.*


 *Services will be contracted out instead of using university employees.*


 *People have always slept overnight in the park.*

 *The campus will displace unhoused people from the park with no place to go. The campus doesn't have any plan to support the unhoused park users.*


 *There is no funding for the supportive housing.*


 *The entire park will be replaced with buildings, eliminating valuable open space from the Southside of Berkeley.*


 *There hasn't been any meaningful public engagement about this project.*


 *The campus has plenty of other places for new housing, such as Clark Kerr Campus, and doesn't need to build at People's Park.*


The Facts


 The student housing building has two wings with varying heights. The north wing is the tallest and features **11 floors of student apartments over a ground floor and a partial basement level**. The south wing is raised to create an open and airy pass-through into the new park space below, and has 6 floors comprised entirely of student apartments. **The overall building height aligns with the City's Southside Plan** that will regulate privately-developed buildings in this area.


 The campus will develop, own, and operate the student housing at People's Park. There are no private developers. There are no private operators. **No profits are being generated for private entities**. This is not luxury housing. It will be comparable in quality and pricing to existing campus housing. In fact, all our campus housing is **below market** and this project will be no exception.


 The method of **construction does not use pile drivers**. The project design relies on auger-cast piles rather than driven piles, which do not create loud noise and do not cause vibrations.


 There will be **no contracted out services**. The student housing will exclusively use employees who are represented, earn benefits, and get paid a living wage.


 Up until the COVID-19 pandemic, the campus enforced a **nightly closure of the park**. As public health conditions improve, and shelters for unhoused people return to their normal capacity, regulations restricting overnight sleeping in public spaces, such as parks and streets, will once again be enforced by cities and agencies throughout California.

 We strongly believe in better solutions for unhoused people than sleeping in unsafe and unsanitary conditions. **We are not waiting for construction to support park users in finding shelter and connecting them with services**. Our full-time social worker is at the park now, day in and day out, to support the park users. He has already found permanent housing for more than 100 households. We have heard the voices of those who advocate for the interests of unhoused people: **We will proceed with construction only after having a plan in place that will offer access to shelter and services to the people currently sleeping in the park**. This is consistent with the campus's current commitments and efforts.

 Various government programs provide financial support for supportive housing, and this project is no exception. **The supportive housing has already secured housing vouchers from the City of Berkeley for this project** and work is moving forward to apply for additional funding programs that are best suited for this site.

 Most of the site, approximately **1.7-acres (which is about 1 1/3 football fields in size) will be maintained as green, open park space**. Many of the existing trees will be preserved. We believe in a safe, revitalized park that will be used by a wider segment of students and the Berkeley community.

 The campus has engaged in **years of extensive public engagement and input** on this project. There have been one-on-one meetings, workshops, focus groups, open houses with hundreds of attendees, presentations in person and online, presentations to the Berkeley City Council and city commissions, there have been opportunities for formal public comment through the environmental review process, and to the UC Board of Regents.

 In response to the Bay Area housing crisis, the campus committed to double its existing student housing. This requires over 8,000 new beds, and that requires building on every site yet identified for new housing. This includes People's Park, Clark Kerr Campus (where legal covenants restrict development until after 2032), and many others. **It is not a question of which sites to develop: we need to utilize every single one, plus more, in order to meet our housing goal**. Building on undeveloped university property that lacks water, electric and transportation infrastructure is not feasible due prohibitive costs and environmental considerations.