

UC San Diego

La Jolla Innovation Center Frequently Asked Questions

What is the La Jolla Innovation Center?

The La Jolla Innovation Center (LJIC) is planned as a new state-of-the-art facility that will house several programs from UC San Diego Health, UC San Diego School of Medicine and UC San Diego Extension to serve students, patients and the larger community. It will include approximately 110,000 square feet of office and educational space, a ground-floor café accessible to the public and 275 parking spaces.

This real estate venture is the result of a public-private partnership with GPI Companies (GPI). UC San Diego has leased approximately 94,000 square feet of space in existing office buildings located adjacent to the site for decades. The volume of proposed space and proximity to the UC San Diego campus and the Veterans Administration (VA) Medical Center are vital to the daily operations of the programs that conduct essential research and treat patients on the site. Integrating UC San Diego Extension at this location would allow both university users and the public easy access to educational services provided at this facility.

Where is the La Jolla Innovation Center located?

The La Jolla Innovation Center will be situated on an approximately one-acre property that is currently owned by GPI and is south of the UC San Diego main campus, on the southwest corner of Villa La Jolla Drive and La Jolla Village Drive. The university will purchase the property prior to development and construction of the project.

Rock Bottom Brewery, a Denver-based chain of brewpubs, recently closed its La Jolla location on this site, providing a unique opportunity to redevelop the property immediately adjacent to the campus to meet current and future university needs. An existing pedestrian and bicycle bridge owned by the city connects directly to this site and provides safe and convenient access to the UC San Diego campus and adjacent VA Medical Center. The project site also lies within a 1/3-mile of two Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations of the UC San Diego Blue Line, expected to begin service in late 2021, providing additional access in an area designated as a “Transit Priority Area” in San Diego’s regional plan.

Why is UC San Diego developing this project off campus, rather than on campus?

As part of the 2018 Long Range Development Plan process, UC San Diego reviewed the available development and redevelopment sites within the campus boundaries, and all sites have been planned for core functions and uses to meet current and projected needs through the year 2035. The 2018 LRDP was also completed prior to UC San Diego’s seismic building review pursuant to the UC Seismic Safety Policy, so it did not account for the UC San Diego Health Sciences and Extension

uses that have since been required to be relocated by the policy. The La Jolla Innovation Center would provide a building for UC San Diego Health Sciences and Extension programs that complies with the UC Seismic Safety Policy without displacing a planned future use by the 2018 LRDP.

In addition, staff from the VA Medical Center and a variety of UC San Diego departments currently occupy off-campus office space in the same commercial center, including Family and Preventive Medicine, Institute of Engineering in Medicine, Psychiatry, Neurosciences and UC San Diego Extension. Although not on campus, the location's immediate proximity and adjacency to campus and the medical area is vital to programs that conduct essential research, treat patients and provide educational services on the site.

Why do the current university departments leasing space on the site need to move into a new building?

It was determined in January 2020 that the existing buildings being leased for these groups were non-compliant with UC Seismic Safety Policy, and therefore renewal of long-term leases is not feasible for UC occupants. The UC Office of the President is only permitting a short-term extension to provide sufficient time for relocation of the UC San Diego campus departments that currently occupy space in leased facilities. The new building's design will provide university departments with a significantly more efficient use of space that allows for consolidation of uses.

Could GPI and UC San Diego seismically retrofit the existing GPI buildings?

The estimated cost to retrofit the existing buildings is approximately \$36 million, a financially infeasible investment for GPI to make in buildings more than 40 years old. The retrofit would also likely be quite invasive and require disruptions and displacements of the current buildings' tenants that could require UC tenants to relocate to an alternate location while potential work and seismic retrofits are performed.

How will this project be financed?

This project is being developed as a public-private partnership between the university and GPI. The land will be owned by the UC Regents and GPI will remain responsible for designing, financing, constructing, owning and operating the new approximately 110,000 GSF, five-story Class 'A' office building with four levels of on-site structured parking pursuant to a long-term ground lease with the UC Regents.

Will UC San Diego occupy the entire building?

The university would occupy the entirety of the proposed office and educational space. The project also includes a separate retail space that would be occupied by a ground level café open to the public (non-university tenant).

What is the project schedule?

The project is currently in the environmental process, with the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) anticipated to be released in early February for a 45-day public review period. Demolition, grading and excavation, site improvements and building construction are anticipated to begin in mid-2021, shortly after all applicable approvals and permits are obtained from the required permitting agencies and approval bodies and the property is transferred to UC ownership.

What are the benefits of this project to the community?

The research that will be conducted on the site is related to children's health, understanding cognitive impairment in seniors, smoking cessation and refugee health and support.

The site also offers programs for veterans with support from the VA, and continuing education for the San Diego community through UC San Diego Extension programs that will be easily accessible to the public.

Patients in the community also benefit from access to public transportation as well as convenient drop off and pick up locations and parking. UC San Diego staff and students that live, study and work on campus can walk or bike to the services provided on the site.

The La Jolla Innovation Center will include a pedestrian-oriented, ground-floor café accessible to members of the public. The building's design is oriented toward efficiency, energy conservation and aesthetic appeal, with attractive landscaping.

How will you be evaluating impacts of the project? What opportunities will the public have to review your findings and provide feedback?

An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is being prepared pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The EIR process was initiated in November 2020 with a 30-day public scoping period, during which UC San Diego solicited input from interested parties and other agencies on the scope and contents of the EIR via email and mail. A public virtual meeting was held on December 7, 2020 to discuss the project and solicit feedback.

A Draft EIR is currently under preparation and will be released for a 45-day public review period in early February with a virtual public hearing to be held in late February. More details will be available at <https://blink.ucsd.edu/facilities/real-estate/ljic.html>.

What is the project approval process?

The Regents of the University of California is the "lead agency" and will have the principal responsibility for considering and approving the proposed project. The Regents will review the project, including the sale, deed and lease terms, building design and analysis presented in the EIR, prior to issuing design and environmental approval. Regents meetings are open to members of the public to attend and provide comments. It is anticipated that the project's design, environmental compliance with CEQA, and lease terms will be presented to the UC Regents for approval in mid-2021.

Will there be any other chances for members of the community to learn more about the project?

The university has established a [website](#), which provides project information, an FAQ document, project presentations, and a place for members of the community to sign up to receive project updates and submit comments and questions.

How will the project assess transportation considerations?

The project will be assessed for transportation impacts in the project's Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Pursuant to CEQA, a vehicle miles traveled (VMT) analysis will be prepared for the project and included in the EIR. This type of analysis emphasizes reducing the number of trips and distances vehicles travel to and from the project. VMT analyses consider proximity to major transit stations, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and mix of land uses and services available at the project or its surroundings, among other features that also reduce vehicular trips.

In addition, UC San Diego has already committed to funding and implementing the installation of adaptive traffic signal controls ("smart signals") along La Jolla Village Drive, from I-805 to North Torrey Pines Road, and continuing the entire length of North Torrey Pines Road. It is anticipated that these traffic signal upgrades will be in operation and improve local traffic flow before the La Jolla Innovation Center is ready for occupancy.

How much traffic is the Light Rail Trolley (LRT) expected to alleviate when the UC San Diego Blue Line extension begins operation in late 2021?

Approximately 60% of the university's faculty, staff and students use alternative transportation for their daily commute and are expected to increase use of alternative transportation by riding on the new trolley extension and means other than a single occupant vehicle.

SANDAG estimates that the three closest LRT stations to the project site (the VA Medical Center, the Pepper Canyon West Station, and the Nobel Drive Station) will have approximately 8,000 boardings (or 4,000 commuters) per day in 2030. The location of the project site in close proximity to these adjacent LRT stations will further alleviate traffic congestion on adjacent roadways.

As a result of COVID and work changes anticipated, does UC San Diego still require as much office space, given flexible work arrangements and remote working practices?

The departments that will occupy the new La Jolla Innovation Center conduct research, provide patient care, deliver academic instruction and interact directly with students. Their daily responsibilities cannot be performed remotely or by flexing office space, and they must be located in an office/educational setting adjacent to campus. The proposed facility also allows for the consolidation of existing space and use, thereby increasing efficiency of leased space.

Does the university plan to acquire available commercial and residential property adjacent to the campus?

The university only considers acquiring property to advance and align with its strategic mission. When a property acquisition is of interest, the university engages in discussions with property owners, as was the case with the La Jolla Innovation Center. The location and the university's presence on the site for decades provided a unique opportunity. Partnering with private developers like GPI, allows the campus to take advantage of industry leading trends in environmental design and competitive financing.

With the exception of the UC San Diego Urgent Care facility, what is the plan for the existing buildings that are currently occupied by UC tenants on the larger 7-acre property once the UC tenants move to the proposed building?

Upon construction completion, the university will relocate the majority of its user groups currently occupying the aging office buildings on the campus to the new office building. The new building's larger floor plate will provide the user groups with a significantly more efficient use of space, reducing the university's overall space needs and existing footprint. The remaining tenants whose needs for co-locating adjacent to campus are less critical will seek leased space elsewhere. It is expected that the existing buildings will continue to be leased to non-university tenants by the owner.

Does the 30-foot height limitation established in the Coastal Overlay Zone apply to the proposed project?

Upon acquisition of the property, the project site would be under the ownership and use of the UC Regents and thus subject to UC land management policies, including those related to building height limits, setbacks and design. Occupants of the building would include UC San Diego Health Sciences, UC San Diego School of Medicine, and UC San Diego Extension which serve students, patients and the larger community.

The Environmental Impact Report will however analyze the compatibility of the project with the visual environment of the Coastal Overlay Zone, campus and surrounding area.

Could more parking be located below grade to reduce the building height?

The project reduced the overall building height by providing two levels of subterranean parking, which are the maximum levels below grade that are feasible due to layers of fill and major city utility lines and easements located beneath the property that make deeper excavation infeasible.

Could the amount of parking associated with the project be reduced by tapping into parking resources on the La Jolla campus for its needs?

The project is proposing a total of approximately 275 parking spaces, of which 69 will be accommodated in existing surface lots within the 7-acre complex, with the rest spread between the four levels of parking included as part of the project. The onsite parking ratio of 2.5 stalls per 1,000

rentable square feet is a highly efficient ratio that takes into account parking availability of the adjacent campus.

This minimum of 275 spaces has been provided after careful evaluation of the project's parking needs, accommodating for those working at this location, visitors participating in the research studies, visiting researchers and physicians and some students driving long distances to attend extension classes. This also accommodates the required accessible parking. It is also important to note that the provision of 275 spaces (a parking ratio of 0.28 space per building occupant) is appropriate given the project's proximity to transit and the robust transportation demand management measures offered by the UC San Diego campus.

Is this just the first phase of a multi-phased development of the rest of GPI's property with taller buildings?

GPI intends to continue to own and operate the existing two-story office buildings in other areas of the center.