

**Spring 2016:** With new financing methods allowed, UCSC launches planning and preparation for what is to be the largest student housing project they've ever attempted. It will be entirely on the west side of campus and consist of roughly 3000 beds of new housing plus a new childcare facility.

**December 2016:** Alison Galloway retires as UCSC's Executive Vice Chancellor and Campus Provost. She has been the strong center of management competence at UCSC. Without her abilities a slide in managerial competence begins.

**Summer 2017:** The project plan has considerably firmed up, including many site surveys in preparation for environmental documents. SHW will be 3072 beds of new housing plus a new childcare facility, all on 26 acres entirely on the west side. The project enjoys broad support.

**August 2017:** UCSC's first consultation with US Fish and Wildlife. The feds make clear they have no intention of blocking the project, but for half the chosen site they will need a mitigation plan on file, basically a plan providing offsetting habitat protections at nearby locations. UCSC has previously done this with successful projects, such as the Ranch View Terrace housing.

**September 2017:** The Vice Chancellor in charge of SHW, lacking in training and experience in these matters and on this scale, focuses on the schedule impact. All 3072 beds at this point are scheduled to begin construction in the Summer of 2018 and to be completed in the Summer of 2022. A 6-month delay would move completion to the end of 2022. The VC decides that would be unacceptable. To "save" that 6 months a hasty decision is made to reduce the west side site by half, increase the density of most of the housing, but move 5% of the housing and childcare to sprawl across the East Meadow. That decision is made in secret and most people will be unaware of it for the next 6 months.

**March 2017 (correction 2018):** Many on campus and UCSC's off-campus friends and supporters become aware of the decision to tear up 17 acres of the Meadow, and a project that up to this point had enjoyed wide support is suddenly very controversial. Organization of EMAC (East Meadow Action Committee)

**February 2018:** First presentation of the project to UCSC's Design Advisory Board, which unanimously rejects putting any of the project in the East Meadow.

**March 2018:** A year has been lost to the schedule, because when the decision to put part of the project in the East Meadow was made none of the preparatory work and surveys had been done for that location. Attempts to remedy that and create an environmental document are rushed but still weak. A draft EIR is released for comment. And the project is taken back to the Design Advisory Board in an attempt to get them to reverse their first vote. However upon further review the Board again unanimously opposes putting any of the project in the East Meadow.

**May 2018:** Public comment period is closed, and the comments have been scathing regarding putting any part of the project in the East Meadow. The Draft EIR has been revealed to be weak and therefore vulnerable. Several groups have signaled litigation.

**September 2018:** The administration decides to tear up the Draft EIR and start over. All public comments are erased. They release a Revised Draft EIR for public comment. Comments are still scathing.

**January 16, 2019:** UCSC briefs the Regents. Opponents also make their case to the Regents.

**February 2019:** Final EIR is issued.

**March 2019:** The project and its EIR are taken to the Regents for approval. UCSC's argument for approval is that the alternatives would cost more, but they (a) leave out the most obvious alternative, which is their original first choice of putting it all on the west side (and doing the mitigation plan), and (b) fail to provide any of the supporting cost data for their conclusions based on cost. After considerable debate, the Regents decide to conditionally approve the project, subject to private review of the missing cost data when it becomes available. Subsequently that data indicates the total cost of the project is \$659 million. There is still no cost estimate of the best alternative, i.e. UCSC's first choice, which is putting it all on the west side.

**April 24, 2019:** HAWC files suit under California environmental law (CEQA), based on the Regents approval.

**April 25, 2019:** EMAC files suit under California environmental law (CEQA), based on the Regents approval.

**July 1, 2019:** Cindy Larive replaces George Blumenthal as Chancellor of UCSC.

**July 31, 2020:** A long list of major donors and supporters of UCSC write to Chancellor Larive, urging her to select and move forward with an alternative version of SHW that does not build in the East Meadow. (see "Influential Allies Appeal to the Chancellor" at [eastmeadowaction.org](http://eastmeadowaction.org))

**May–October, 2020:** This is the period in which our original suit comes to a close, initially with triumph, then ultimately with a mixed decision. The court's tentative written decision is very positive. The court tentatively finds in EMAC's favor on both main points at issue: that the Regents approval of the project was illegal (because they didn't have the cost data when they made the decision based on cost), and that the EIR itself did not meet the legal requirement to fully inform the public of project impacts. However, after issuing the tentative decision, after oral arguments, the judge reverses himself on the EIR finding while continuing to find the Regents approval illegal. The final written decision ordering the Regents to rescind their approval of the project is issued in October.

**November, 2020:** The court's final decision creates a situation where the new Chancellor has to go back to the Regents for some form of approval in any event, so this is the perfect opportunity to revert to UCSC's original first choice, the all-on-the-west-side plan. The decision falls to the new Chancellor. She can end opposition to SHW by reverting to UCSC's original first choice, or she can continue the long slow battle for the second choice. She chooses the latter.

**March 2021:** Larive goes back to the Regents for the *second* approval of SHW, still the version that puts 5% of the housing plus the childcare in the East Meadow. The Regents grant that approval but only if Larive commits to the false promises the previous Chancellor made in March 2019 regarding student rents. (30% below market rate) Larive resists making that commitment, but then relents when it becomes clear it is the only way to get Regent approval.

**April 2021:** HAWC and EMAC separately file new suits based on the new approval. The project remains tied up in litigation.

**Spring 2022:** EMAC loses the appeal of its first case and concludes that further litigation is pointless. California law does not give the courts the power to reject a project because it is environmentally bad. It only gives courts the power to rule on the adequacy of the disclosure to the public of the environmental impacts of a project. And even if the courts find the disclosure to be inadequate, the project proponent can remedy that shortcoming with improved disclosure and proceed with the project. However, what environmental litigation can do is create time in which the project proponent can reconsider in the face of objections that have been raised, for example by modifying the project. In this instance, the Chancellor and the Regents both make it abundantly clear that, even if given the time to reconsider and the information that called for a new direction, they were never going to change course. HAWC, in contrast, continues to litigate.

**March 2023:** The delay has been so long that the cost of the project has exceeded its approvals. As a result, UCSC must go back to the Regents for a *third* approval. They adopt a novel strategy for doing so. The only construction approval they ask for is for the East Meadow portion of the project, which adds only 140 student beds out of the 3072 originally proposed. The East Meadow portion of the project, estimated in March 2019 to cost \$96 million, is now estimated four years later to cost \$145.6 million, a 52% increase. UCSC does not disclose what the cost increase has been for the entire SHW project over those same 4 years of unnecessary delays, but in March 2019 the entire SHW project was estimated to cost \$659 million. If the entire project has escalated over those 4 years at the same rate as its East Meadow component has, the total cost of the project has increased by \$343 million and as of March 2023 would have cost just over a billion dollars. Rough estimate though that may be, it gives us an approximate idea of what all this delay is costing: just these 4 years of delay are costing well over \$300 million. And we are in reality looking at 6 years of delay at minimum. Who pays all those increased costs? Like all on-campus housing costs, the delay costs must 100% be paid by on-campus students in the rent they pay. The Regents, who too years earlier had been so insistent

that rents be held down, approved this request with no debate, little discussion, and no serious discussion of student rents.