
A New People's Park

1 message

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Chancellor's Office

Dear Campus Community,

I am pleased to share with you that today the Regents of the University of California voted to approve our plans for a new People's Park. We are grateful for the Regents' endorsement, and for the strong backing we received from Mayor Arreguin, Vice Mayor Droste, Councilmember Robinson, three former presidents of the ASUC, the Telegraph Business Improvement District, and a diverse cross section of our neighbors, religious leaders, parents and alumni who offered written expressions of support for the project.

I want to use this opportunity to **provide information on what lies ahead**, report on the **results of a new student opinion survey** about the project, and describe planning underway for **student engagement**.

Our Commitment to the Unhoused People in Our Community

The plan the Regents carefully reviewed and approved has four main elements:

- Create supportive housing for unhoused and very low-income people in our community
- Provide below-market rate housing for some 1,100 undergraduates in a new residential facility
- Preserve more than half of the site as revitalized green space that will be open and accessible to all
- Establish a public memorial and celebration of the park's past and meaning.

Even as we expect to begin construction in the coming year, I want to assure the community that we remain committed to what is a changed plan. We have heard the voices of experts and activists, and will not begin construction until we are able to offer housing and services to the 40-45 unhoused people currently sleeping in the park, as well as a daytime place to gather. This is consistent with the university's longstanding commitment to, and concern for, unhoused members of our community. Even as work continues to ensure their needs will be met once the park is temporarily closed for construction, our full-time social worker is in People's Park every day, helping to connect those in need with the services and support they require. To date, he has found permanent housing for more than 80 unhoused people.

Listening to Students: Survey Results

We have also taken an important step to ensure we are listening to the full range of representative student perspectives regarding housing issues in general, and plans for People's Park in particular. In late August, we engaged a leading independent survey firm with extensive experience helping student voices to be heard on campuses across the country. They conducted a scientific, random sample survey of the graduate and undergraduate student populations. The results show that current

UC Berkeley students support the People's Park project by a 56% to 31% margin even before being provided with basic information about the project's four main elements, as described above. Once informed about those elements, the survey found that project support among Berkeley students grew to a 64% to 24% margin, with **68% specifically supporting the construction of student housing on the site**. As part of our commitment to full transparency, you are invited to review the [methodology and initial data set](#), as well as [the actual survey](#) that was sent to students.

That same survey also found significant levels of concern regarding the project's impact on unhoused people. We shall continue to heed and respect those voices, by virtue of the aforementioned change of plans and our commitment to new supportive housing on the People's Park site. In addition, there is work underway to expand and extend our academic programs and external partnerships that are focused on addressing the effects of, and developing solutions for, the housing crisis in our city, state and country.

Opportunities to Learn More and Get Involved

We have also learned from the survey that a significant portion of the student body lacks accurate, comprehensive information about all that we intend to do in and for People's Park. To help address that gap, we have launched a [new People's Park project website](#) with updated information and FAQs. In addition, we intend to develop ways for students and other members of the campus community to get updated, accurate information about the project, provide input and feedback, and learn about meaningful opportunities for participation in campus efforts to address the housing crises confronting both students and the unhoused members of our community.

Ever since we announced plans for the People's Park project in 2018, I have been convinced that we have an opportunity for a win-win-win benefitting our students, unhoused people in our community, and our neighbors across the city. While I am appreciative of the support we have gained, I know we have work to do to build awareness, understanding and support among those who remain skeptical. I look forward to continued, meaningful engagement with every part of our community, supporters and opponents alike.

Sincerely,

Carol T. Christ
Chancellor

This message was sent to all UC Berkeley faculty, staff and students.

If you are a manager who supervises UC Berkeley employees without email access, please circulate this information to all.

