

# A Sacramento Investment Without Displacement

## Viewpoint on Aggie Square

*Why is Aggie Square a Concern to Sacramento Investment Without Displacement?*

*How could it impact adjacent neighborhoods?*

*How can you get involved?*

### What is Aggie Square and where is it?

Aggie Square is a development proposal to be located at the UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento. The plan is to develop about 24 acres of campus property into additional research facilities and mixed-use development for students and employees of UC Davis and private industry. The first phase, being planned out now, is about 8.25 acres. UC Davis anticipates new partnerships in new technologies, new ways of advancing human health, and new partnerships in lifelong learning. Aggie Square will include spaces on the Med Center campus for research, housing, dining, and businesses. The buildout of Aggie Square will be carried out by private investors and developers in partnership with UC Davis Med Center. The project will be designed, financed, constructed, owned and managed through a public/private partnership between the selected developer(s) and the University. [Click here for UC Davis' description of Aggie Square.](#)



Above: UC Davis' representation of proposed Phase I of the Aggie Square Development. (1) A connecting  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre open plaza known as "Aggie Square; (2) 250,000 sq. ft. office tower, continuing and professional education; (3) Housing and plaza that opens up to Stockton Blvd.; (4) Half million sq. ft. of state-of-the-art labs and more -- med tech/bio tech industry co-locating with UC Davis research; tech incubators; (5) Mobility Hub for electric buses, carshare, bikeshare, shuttle service.

### **When will Aggie Square be developed?**

The buildout will take place in stages over approximately 10 years. The first stage is already being planned on 8.25 acres, to include approximately 1 million square feet, with construction estimated to start in 2021. A UC Davis 'Request for Proposals' went out to developers and from the submitted proposals, the University developed a shortlist of developers with whom to discuss the project further. (Click [here](#) to view that RFP.) In December 2019, UC Davis selected Baltimore-based Wexford Science & Technology as their Aggie Square Phase I developer. The developer has teamed up with GMH Capital Partners, and together they will "design, finance, construct, own and manage the first phase of Aggie Square." (Click [here](#) to view UC Davis announcement.)

### **What will the impact be of this large-scale development on the neighborhoods adjacent to the UC Med Center and the proposed Aggie Square?**

The influx of tech businesses, new employees, and UC students and faculty at Aggie Square has the potential to bring positive opportunities to existing residents and businesses in the surrounding neighborhoods of Oak Park, Fruitridge, Tahoe Park and Elmhurst. However, in our research meetings with elected officials, local government economic development managers and UC Davis' Aggie Square planners, we became concerned about their lack of understanding of the vulnerability of our neighborhood residents and institutions. They admitted there is no plan to prevent the displacement of existing residents and businesses that could easily occur as Aggie Square is built out. With Sacramento suffering from an existing housing shortage, and property values continuing to increase, an influx of new employees and students will put even more pressure on the housing markets in these neighborhoods surrounding the UC Davis Med Center. The result will be higher rents and home prices, more homelessness and over-crowding, and families forced to spend an even larger percentage of their income on housing or be forced out of their homes and neighborhoods. The influx of employees and businesses could further exacerbate challenges related to transportation, air quality, law enforcement, schools, health and open space, and could further divide our communities and deepen existing inequities.

### **Whose responsibility is it to make a community-sensitive plan that seeks to prevent displacement? UC Davis? The City and County of Sacramento?**

While Aggie Square will be developed in the City of Sacramento, it will be constructed on land owned by the State, controlled by the University of California. Thus, the University and its selected developers will not be required to pull City permits or pay City impact fees, such as those for affordable housing. Our view is that UC Davis is a public, taxpayer-financed institution, and as such, has a responsibility to act in the public interest. However, it is up to the at-risk neighborhoods and affected constituencies to demand that UC Davis act in the public interest by developing plans, policies and programs that will benefit vulnerable communities and build up existing residents and their neighborhood institutions.

### **The Solution: A "Community Benefits Agreement." But what is a CBA?**

A Community Benefits Agreement is a contract signed by community groups and a real estate developer that requires the developer to provide specific amenities and/or mitigations to the local community or neighborhood. A good CBA is clear and enforceable over time. Benefits to the community can include cash benefits, living wage and union job requirements, environmental and transportation mitigations, public open space, support for youth, affordable housing and renter protections, and other programs and amenities. ([Click here to learn more basics on CBA's.](#))

### **How can the adjacent neighborhoods get UC Davis to negotiate a CBA?**

U.C. Davis is a powerful institution and it would be impossible to think that one or two local organizations or neighborhood associations could convince the University to enter into a CBA that would effectively protect and strengthen the neighborhoods over time. To get UC Davis' attention and convince them that a CBA is the right strategy -- the right thing to do -- we will need

many organizations and associations, working together, to show our power as a collective entity. Our diverse constituencies, working together, ARE powerful.

### **How can my organization and constituencies get involved?**

Sacramento Investment Without Displacement holds regular meetings to develop strategy related to the Aggie Square development and the goal of obtaining a CBA. We invite you to join the invite list for those meetings and to attend regularly. Email [Info.SaciWD@gmail.com](mailto:Info.SaciWD@gmail.com) to inquire about the meetings.

We encourage your organization to join as a member of Sacramento Investment Without Displacement (SaciWD). This community-based collaborative organization serves as a collective action organization and our collective voice in demanding that the development of Aggie Square not be done at the expense of existing neighborhood residents and small businesses. Our communities are not disposable. We invite you to find out more about our organization and apply for membership. To obtain or submit a member application, please send us an email with the name of your organization and your contact information. Emails should be sent to [Info.SaciWD@gmail.com](mailto:Info.SaciWD@gmail.com). A representative of SaciWD can come to your board or staff meeting to talk about Sacramento Investment without Displacement and the Aggie Square development. Our work on investment without displacement reflects a larger nationwide Investment Without Displacement movement. Click [here for Climate Plan's Commitment](#) and [here for SPARCC](#), both have more info on this movement.

### **What would we ask for in a Community Benefits Agreement?**

Our CBA “asks” will come out of discussions with our/your constituents who live in the affected neighborhoods. Your organization’s expertise is needed so we can inform residents of the potential impact of Aggie Square on the neighborhoods and how to mitigate those potential impacts. We need expertise in all issues including education, food access, health, jobs, small business, the environment, transportation, safe streets, youth, housing and job development, and more. We need organizations that will work with us to have one-on-one and group discussions with residents to inform them about Aggie Square and to get their input.

### **What leverage do we really have with a powerful institution like UC Davis?**

UC Davis is taxpayer funded and wants to be seen as acting in the public interest. UC Davis Med Center is a health institution and wants to be seen as acting in a manner that supports public health. This public persona is a powerful motivator for a public institution. Also, UC Med Center will need some support from the City of Sacramento—sewer services, local public funds and support in expanding the impact of Aggie Square into other areas of the City, including further down Stockton Blvd. Our local elected officials can be powerful allies in our efforts if we can make an effective collective case that this is their role.

### **For more information:**

- For a speaker on this campaign, contact [Info.SaciWD@gmail.com](mailto:Info.SaciWD@gmail.com).
- Organizations desiring to become members of SaciWD should contact [Info.SaciWD@gmail.com](mailto:Info.SaciWD@gmail.com)
- More information is available at our website: [SaciWD.org](http://SaciWD.org)