

UCSD proposes development of conference center/hotel

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UCSD PROPOSES DEVELOPMENT OF CONFERENCE CENTER/HOTEL

The University of California, San Diego, today announced it is seeking proposals for development of a conference center/hotel complex on a 9.5 acre university-owned site located at 9820 North Torrey Pines Road, adjacent to the main campus.

The request for proposals (RFP) for the "Blackhorse Farms" land, to be ground-leased, is based on a 1986 plan approved by the Coastal Commission and City of San Diego. That previous plan, for construction of a luxury Ritz Carlton hotel, called for 210 guest rooms; 15,300 square feet of conference space, including a 7,488 square foot ballroom; a health club with swimming pool, spa and tennis courts, and 358 parking spaces.

Nancy Kossan, UCSD director of real estate development, said the prior approvals remain in effect, as do a number of required on and off-site improvements made by the previous developer before returning the land to the university.

A conference for potential bidders and their teams to discuss the project will be held at 9 a.m. May 10 at the Institute of the Americas on the UCSD campus. Information on the meeting and the RFP package can be obtained by FAX to the UCSD Real Estate Development Office, (619) 534-4210.

A developer will be selected in late August, and final plans will be presented to the UC Board of Regents for approval in January, 2000.

Kossan said the conference center/hotel complex would meet a significant UCSD need for facilities to host academic and executive meetings/conferences, overnight visitors associated with research seminars, and candidates being recruited by academic departments. In addition, she noted, the ground lease will provide income to the campus.

The complex also will provide conference and meeting facilities for the many high tech and biotech companies in the Torrey Pines and Golden Triangle areas. Kossan said that having the new facility available is expected to provide additional opportunities for interactions between the campus and the community.

A campus committee headed by David R. Miller, associate vice chancellor, initially reviewed three types of development alternatives for the Blackhorse Farms location: the conference center/hotel complex, faculty housing, or research and development space. He said the conference center/hotel alternative was selected after thoughtful review because "it would not negatively impact ongoing expansion plans of other campus units, it would provide employment opportunities for students, and it has a precedent of being acceptable to the surrounding community."

Anne Evans, proprietor of the nearby Lodge at Torrey Pines, said that "the local lodging market is a dynamic one and I'm sure this project will help strengthen the market. The conference center hotel will be a valuable asset to the university and area businesses."

Jerry Westenhaver, manager of the Hyatt Islandia and incoming president of the San Diego Hotel/Motel Association, said the organization is pleased to support a potential new hotel to the area.

And Peter Limber, president of the homeowners association of the adjacent Blackhorse Farms residential project, added that "we look forward to the site being developed with a high quality hotel. The new facility should provide a substantial benefit to the community."

The Request for Proposals will be reviewed by a new 13-member committee of faculty and administrative representatives appointed by Chancellor Robert C. Dynes.

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