

# Measure H-- Annexation of County Land for DiSC 2022

## Pros and Cons

### League of Women Voters Davis Area

**The Question:** *Should residents approve annexing agricultural land to develop the Davis Innovation and Sustainability Campus, referred to as DiSC 2022?* Annexation of county land for city-related uses has required citizen approval since voters passed the “Citizens Right to Vote on Future Use of Open Space and Agricultural Lands” ordinance in 2000 (as Measure J), renewed in 2010 (as Measure R) and renewed again in 2020 (as Measure D). (For a more detailed account of this history, see the Appendix at the end of this discussion.)

**The Situation:** For almost two decades, Davis has studied options for an innovation park with the goal of leveraging UC Davis' international reputation for academic and research advancements in agriculture, biotech, green-tech, and food science research. Four options studied initially appeared to be viable, but these have since been reduced to one (see appendix for a more detailed history). The project site, located immediately east of Davis city limits, east of Mace Blvd and just north of Second Street/ County Road 32A, is agricultural land owned by the developer that has been productively farmed for many decades. Moving forward with the project will put an end to farming on the site. In 2020, Ramco Enterprises, along with the Buzz Oates Group and Reynolds & Brown, presented a proposal for a 203-acre innovation center on the property which was voted down by Davis citizens. The original proposal, as approved by the Council and submitted to voters can be found on the City of Davis website in the Council meeting of July 7, 2020 [\[LINK\]](#).

**The Proposal:** Ramco Enterprises' and the Buzz Oates Group's new proposal, as presented to the City Council on February 1, 2022, is for 102 acres of the project site, on the east side of Mace Blvd just north of Second Street/ County Road 32A, but now ending on the north at Alhambra Avenue. The full proposal with pro and con statements can be found on the City of Davis website as [\[LINK\]](#); here is the summary:

Construction, phased in over a 10-15 year period, will include:

- Office, laboratory, research and development and ancillary retail space: 550,000 sq. ft;
- Advanced manufacturing space: 550,000 sq. ft.;
- Housing: 460 units, including 74 on-site affordable housing units;
- Agricultural buffer, park, greenway and open space: 23.2 acres, and
- Transit plaza for bus lines, shuttles to/from Amtrak: 0.6 acres.

For a longer listing of amenities and project improvements, see the Davis Enterprise article on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, “DiSC 2022: Arguments for and Against” [\[LINK\]](#)

**Fiscal Implications:** Estimates vary for the economic impact of sales revenue, jobs for people in the 25-55 age group and resulting increased school attendance.

**Pros and Cons Table<sup>1</sup>**

|                                | <b>Pros</b>  | <b>Cons</b>   |
|--------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>City and School Revenue</b> | <p>Estimated annual city revenue of \$3.9 million to support essential services at full buildout. Estimated economic stimulus to existing business of \$50 million/ year.</p> <p>One-time developer payment of \$2 million will offset the impact on existing public facilities and help with long-awaited projects such as a South Davis library and a community center.</p> <p>One-time developer payment of \$2.3 million to DJUSD for schools, \$722,000/year of bond, parcel and CFD taxes (<a href="#">LINK</a>), plus \$10,000/year per additional student.</p> | <p>City and schools will keep only 10-15% of property tax and other revenue generated by DiSC. The remainder goes to the County and state.</p> <p>Decreased demand for business and retail space that started in 2020 may continue. Competing business parks in neighboring cities all add to this project’s overestimation of economic benefit.</p> <p>Comparable development on existing infill land would provide similar construction tax revenue for other City services as well as equivalent school impact fees but with less financial demands on the City for providing services to the project.</p> |
| <b>Environment</b>             | <p>The most environmentally friendly project of its kind in the nation with all buildings powered with 100% clean energy with on-site solar generation, commercial and housing structures built without natural gas connections, and legally required to be 100% carbon neutral by 2040.</p>   | <p>DiSC is projected to increase the City's annual emissions by 20,000 metric tons, largely from vehicle emissions, increasing the city’s carbon footprint by 5%. Paving over 100 acres of agricultural land is not “environmentally friendly” and doesn’t "protect endangered species" as claimed.</p>   |
| <b>Housing</b>                 | <p>The 74 units of permanently dedicated affordable housing will help to meet the City’s required allocation. For Sale housing to address the “missing middle” is included in the affordable housing piece and will benefit young home buyers. The 460 units of on-site housing will provide many UCD graduates and other young families the opportunity to live in Davis.</p>   | <p>DiSC promoters cannot guarantee that the developed housing will go to those who work onsite. The affordable housing offered is only about half of what the City imposed on new development projects before the Cannery project in the 2010s.</p>   |
| <b>Jobs</b>                    | <p>DiSC will have the potential to attract next-generation research firms, providing local, good-paying jobs, retaining university-educated residents and attracting others. Overall, it’s a strong stimulus to the Davis economy with benefits to all.</p>  | <p>No company has yet committed to DiSC. Companies that operate at DiSC could be environmentally damaging, not green, nor high-tech, nor high-paying.</p>   |
| <b>Downtown</b>                | <p>New retail space can be built only when there is enough demand onsite, thereby protecting existing businesses. This stipulation applies both to Downtown and</p>  | <p>The Economic Impact Report (EIR) for the project admits that DiSC will compete with existing retail and hotel space, especially in</p>   |

<sup>1</sup> The “pros” come from statements from Yes on H supporters and “cons” come from No on H supporters edited for style and length.

|                |  |   |
|----------------|--|---|
|                | other existing retail centers.   | Downtown Davis.   |
| <b>Traffic</b> | Yes, traffic will increase, but not without improvements to mitigate the impact. Project includes \$45.4 million to implement 23 specific improvements to the Mace Boulevard-I-80 area; \$150,000 annually for transit, shuttles to Amtrak, roadway repairs, and for bicycle and pedestrian safety. An independent firm concluded DiSC-supported improvements will help reduce commute times at the Mace and I-80 interchange. | DiSC could add 12,000 additional daily car trips onto Mace Blvd when completed but there are no guarantees of specific reductions in traffic counts or wait times.<br><br>Traffic from comparable infill land would generate less traffic and increase the efficiency of existing transit and bicycle options.  |
| <b>Summary</b> | DiSC will support Davis, rather than other cities, by providing revenue to the General Fund to maintain the city's infrastructure and amenities. It will advance the Davis economy by creating housing and jobs for UCD graduates and others. Traffic and other concerns are fully addressed.  | A business park outside current city limits is unnecessary and would be better placed elsewhere to preserve Davis' character. Needed housing can be built on infill land that is better located to reduce the impact of increased traffic. The DiSC proposal overstates potential benefits and inadequately addresses environmental, traffic and economic concerns. |

## Measure B Supporters and Opponents Websites

### Pro DiSC

Gloria Partida,  
Mayor City of Davis  
[www.DavisForH.com](http://www.DavisForH.com)

### Con DiSC

Michael Corbett  
Former Mayor, City of Davis  
[www.VoteNoOnDISC.com](http://www.VoteNoOnDISC.com)

## **Appendix: History of Exploration of an Innovation Park Concept for Davis**

The City has studied options for an innovation park for over 20 years:

- 1996 –Economic Research Associates identifies a 200-250-acre technology park as the best option for economic development for Davis and notes that few sites within the city are large enough for this purpose;
- 2001—Davis’ General Plan includes the goal of a research and innovation park;
- 2010— An Innovation Park Task Force (IPTF), consisting of City and UC staff, advisors and students convenes to provide recommendations for an innovation park;
- 2014—A City-issued Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEI) for an Innovation Park elicits three candidates;
- 2015—One firm drops out, the second retracts its proposal (since applied in the City of Woodland 10 miles to the north) and the third is pended at the applicant’s request;
- 2016—The Nishi Gateway Project, proposing housing units, innovation park and open space connected to the UCD Arboretum, is narrowly defeated (300 votes) by citizens;
- 2017—Ramco Enterprises, the Buzz Oates Group and Reynolds & Taylor, re- submits the pended third proposal for an innovation campus with employee-focused housing;
- 2018--A revised Nishi project which focused on student housing comes back to Davis voters and passes.
- 2020—The Ramco-Oates-Reynolds & Brown proposal (DISC 2020) is defeated by citizens’ vote.
- 2021—Ramco-Oates (without Reynolds & Brown) submits a revised, smaller version of its previous proposal, now called DiSC 2022. The northern half of the 2020 project remains in the ownership of Reynolds & Brown.