Potential University Development Projects in Dixon, California

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Urban Planning 199
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Executive Summary

The young residents of Dixon, California face two problems; they struggle with achieving high levels of educational attainment and earn less per year than the U.S. average. Data from the U.S. Department of Education indicates that towns that have immediate access to higher education tend to perform better with regard to educational attainment and average annual income. Dixon sits just five miles away from one of the state’s better-known research universities, UC Davis. Outside of Davis, Dixon is the closest town to UC Davis. Furthermore, Dixon is the only neighboring community without immediate access to higher education facilities. Combined, these two characteristics suggest that a partnership between the two would be beneficial to both parties.

The report proposes the following three UC Davis-affiliated projects in Dixon; housing and shopping complexes, a satellite campus, and crop sciences facilities. The recommendations are based on three case studies of successful university development projects that involved expanding into neighboring towns; the Pacific University Hillsboro campus, the Temecula Education Center, and the Ivy tech Goshen Center. I argue that based on the successes of the three case studies, enacting one or all of the recommendations would lead to a significant revitalization in Dixon. The recommended projects amount to several million dollars, but state and federal grant programs can help supplement the funding from the university. Grant funding will reduce the cost of the projects and bring higher education to a community that is in desperate need of educational opportunities. The projects will be both heavily subsidized and equally beneficial to both Dixon and UC Davis.
Introduction:

The town of Dixon, California should create a mutually beneficial relationship with the nearby University of California, Davis (UC Davis). Dixon would capitalize on a missed economic opportunity that occurred in 2006. Voters struck down a proposed horse racetrack that would have occupied Dixon’s northeast quadrant. Rejecting the racetrack was a significant decision for Dixon. Despite the struggling economy, the town residents wanted better, more productive investments in the community. The city now owns the land where the track would have been built, in addition to a few surrounding lots. In total, the property consists of 450 continuous acres of developable land with immediate access to water and power supplies. Despite the available utilities, the property has yet to attract development.

Given the lack of economic productivity in this area of Dixon, it would make sense for Dixon city officials to actively market the property to developers. Economic partnership with UC Davis should be a primary objective for Dixon’s future development. Additionally, according to the university’s mission statement, UC Davis aims to “partner in economic development with those individuals, foundations, government entities, businesses and philanthropic organization that are actively engaged in improving the economy of the region, state, and nation, and the quality of life for all.”

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The university can accomplish this goal by working with city officials to bring university-related development to Dixon.

The Dixon property makes an ideal location for university development for two reasons, it is the closest available development-ready land and it has direct access to the only major freeway in the region, Interstate 80. Additionally, Dixon makes an ideal development partner because it is the only city in the region without immediate access to higher education. Other nearby communities like Woodland and Vacaville are less qualified for a UC Davis partnership because they are much further away. Woodland and Vacaville residents also have higher educational attainment figures and higher average annual incomes per year than Dixon residents (see Figure 3 below). Most importantly, a partnership between Dixon and UC Davis would help city officials deliver development projects that meet the community’s standards.

My method for selecting case studies involved finding cities with populations below 105,000 that had attracted university development projects within the past 20 years. Although I used 105,000 as the population cutoff mark for case study, most of the cities used in the report have populations below 70,000. Regarding my statistical methods, I used national averages as a benchmark for comparisons. The national averages were obtained using 2010 U.S. Census data.

This report uses U.S. Census data, case studies, and interviews to shape and enforce recommendations for university housing and shopping facilities, a satellite campus, and crop science facilities. Following the introduction this report is organized into five sections, Background, Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile, Case Studies, Proposal, and Conclusion. The Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile section discusses age, educational attainment, and employment characteristics. The Case Studies section details three case studies, Pacific University of Oregon Hillsboro Center, the Temecula Education Center, and the Ivy Tech Goshen Campus. The proposal section discusses the three recommended development projects listed above. The recommendations argue for development projects that serve two purposes, to benefit the Dixon community and to help UC Davis accomplish the goals in their mission statement.
Background:

The town of Dixon is located in Northern California’s Solano County (see Figure 1). According to the 2012 American Community Survey (ACS 2012), Dixon has the second smallest population in Solano County with 18,282 residents.² Although Dixon’s roots can be traced as far back as 1853, the town was not officially founded until 1868.³ Historically, Dixon has grown at a relatively slow rate. With regard to population growth, in April 1986 Dixon voters approved measure B, which established a maximum population growth rate of 3% per year.⁴ Dixon officials have yet to establish a commercial growth limit. In 2014 there were seven commercial development projects within Dixon city limits, three were new development while the remained four were remodel projects.⁵ Despite relatively consistent commercial development, Dixon has few major employment centers. This has caused Dixon to have a rather high commuter population. Most of Dixon’s commuters work in either Sacramento or the San Francisco Bay Area.

Figure 1: Dixon Location Map (Source MapsOfWorld and Google Earth)

With regard to Dixon’s relation to nearby UC Davis, town residents, also known as Dixonites, often allege that the Davis stole the university from Dixon. Although the allegation is popular knowledge amongst Dixonites, research has yet to uncover supportive evidence. Aside from the anecdotal connection Dixon and UC Davis share few visible connections despite their close proximity to one another. One thing is clear, UC Davis has helped the Davis community succeed in ways that the Dixon community has not. On average Davis residents achieve higher educational attainment and have higher annual incomes than Dixon residents.  

Demographic and Socioeconomic Profile:

Dixon’s young population struggles with achieving high educational attainment. Low educational attainment may also play a role in Dixon’s lower than average annual incomes. Young population, educational attainment, and employment characteristics will each be discussed within their own subsection. These three features are important because they reveal which sectors of Dixon’s population would benefit most from local UC Davis development.

Age

Males and females in Dixon have comparable age distributions; however, the data suggests that females outnumber males in the 60 years of age and over categories (see Figure 2). Dixon has a young population with a median age of 33.3 compared to the national median age of 36.8. Approximately 32% of the Dixon residents are 19 years of age or younger. In fact, 52% of the residents are actually younger than 36 years of age. Conversely, only about 10% of Dixon residents are over the age of 64. These numbers suggest that Dixon has a large percentage of residents in an age range that would benefit from collegiate development projects. In other words, most Dixon residents fall within the traditional age ranges that attend primary, secondary, or higher-level educational institutions.

Educational Attainment

There are nine schools located within Dixon’s city limits, three high schools and six elementary/middle schools. There are no colleges in Dixon, though a partnership with a local community college, Solano Community College (SCC), has brought college-level courses to Dixon High School through the College Advancement Program (CAP). According to Dixon Unified School District, CAP courses are open to high school students as well the general public.⁷ CAP may help reduce Dixon’s educational attainment struggles. Dixon residents between the age of 18 and 24 currently rank well below the national averages for attending college. In fact, Dixon residents in all calculated age ranges fall well below the national average for college level educational attainment (See Figure 3.).

Figure 3: Higher Education Statistics (Source: ACS 2012 5-year estimate, S1501)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>USA (65 or older)</th>
<th>Dixon</th>
<th>Woodland</th>
<th>Vacaville</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>6.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>21.9</td>
<td>18.3</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 or older</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>18.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender appears to have a role in Dixon’s educational attainment figures. Males tend to have higher educational attainment than females. Unfortunately, female residents

appear to face the biggest obstacles with regard to completing both high school and college (see Figure 4). The data suggests that Dixon needs to address the challenge of increasing educational attainment amongst its female residents. One aspect of gender and educational attainment does generate hope. Dixon males and females have a comparable proportion of Bachelor’s degree holders (21% and 18%, respectively). However, females in the 25 to 34 age range actually have a higher percentage of Bachelor’s degree holders than males in the same age range (26% and 19%, respectively).

**Figure 4: Educational Attainment by Gender (Source: ACS 2012 5-year estimate, S1501)**

![Educational Attainment by Gender](image)

**Employment Characteristics**

Dixon residents are employed in a wide range of industries. Most Dixonites hold employment in either the education, health care, social service, or public administrative industries. Although only about 4% of Dixonites are employed in the agriculture industry, agricultural goods account for approximately 19% of Dixon’s overall goods production.\(^8\) The small percentage of Dixonites employed by the agriculture industry may be the result of technological advances that have reduced reliance on manual labor. A large number of Dixonites are employed in the trade, transportation, and warehouse industries. Several warehouse developments in Dixon serve as significant employment centers and account

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for a large percentage of local jobs. Companies like Altec, Baselite, Cardinal Health, Gymboree, and Superior Packing all have large warehouse facilities located with Dixon city limits. Combined, the aforementioned companies account for approximately 23% of Dixon’s employment opportunities.

In 2011 there were 4,518 employment opportunities in Dixon. Unfortunately, Dixon residents held only 23% of the available jobs. Approximately 89% of Dixon’s residents are employed outside of Dixon (see Figure 5). The data suggests that Dixon businesses have difficulty employing Dixon residents. Young Dixonites especially have a difficult time finding local employment. According to recent data workers under the age of 29 hold only 27% of Dixon’s jobs. The earnings opportunities in Dixon vary widely; however, most jobs in Dixon pay relatively well. Of the 4,500 jobs in Dixon 76% pay more than $1,250 per month, with 35% paying more than $3,333 per month. With regard to employment by gender, males hold the majority of jobs as compared to women in Dixon (54% and 46%, respectively).

**Figure 5:** Dixon Employment Inflow Outflow Map (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, LEHD)

![Employment Inflow Outflow Map](http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/)

**Case Studies**

In order to determine the viability of my three recommendations I analyzed three case studies involving universities that expanded to nearby communities. All of the universities used in this section expanded into towns less than 15 miles away from the

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location of their respective main campuses. Two of the three case studies involve development projects within the state of California. The remaining case study focuses on a small Indian town that was able to attract multiple university development projects. Combined, these three case studies demonstrate that it is possible for small communities to attract university development from neighboring universities.

**Pacific University of Oregon – Forestville / Hillsboro, Oregon**

Pacific University (PACU) is a small liberal arts college located in the Oregon town of Forest Grove. The university sits on a 55-acre lot in the middle town and currently has an enrolled population of 3,416.¹¹ Pacific University is comprised of one main campus in Forest Grove and three satellite campuses, Eugene, Hillsboro, and Woodburn.¹² The Eugene and Woodburn campuses offer both undergraduate and graduate coursework, while the Hillsboro campus or the Health Professions Campus, exclusively offers graduate and professional coursework. The Eugene and Woodburn campuses are both extensions of the university’s college of education. Although the Woodburn campus is PACU’s most recent development project, most of the university’s funding has found its way to the Hillsboro campus.

Pacific University’s Hillsboro campus was officially complete in 2006. The 1.1-acre, five-story campus cost the university approximately $30 million to develop. The Hillsboro campus is located just over 6 miles away from PACU’s main campus in Forest Grove. According to Oregon Metro, the Hillsboro campus increased local transit ridership by 59,167 trips per year. Students commuting from PACU’s main campus to the Hillsboro campus may be the cause of the increase in transit ridership. This suggests a correlation between developing satellite campuses and increasing transit ridership rates. One certain benefit of the Hillsboro campus is the creation of local employment opportunities for Hillsboro residents. The campus offers employment in two ways. First, the university employs local academic professionals like professors, counselors, and general staff. Second, PACU leases commercial space to companies who in turn hire

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http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/pacific-university-3212

http://www.pacificu.edu/admissions/undergrad/enrolling/visit.cfm
employees. Increased transit ridership and new employment opportunities represent only two of the positive impacts of the satellite campus on the Hillsboro community.

Another benefit associated with PACU’s Hillsboro campus is increased public outreach in the Hillsboro community. Thanks to the campus, Hillsboro residents have a new avenue for obtaining regular low-cost medical examinations through community-oriented programs. Residents have the opportunity to receive services like optometry, dental exams, audiology, and physical therapy. These services are mutually beneficial because they offer affordable care options to residents and also allow students to gain hands-on experience in the medical field.

Residents of Forest Grove were initially critical of PACU’s decision to build a campus in Hillsboro. According to a 2014 Metro news article, even Forest Hill’s mayor Pete Truax, was critical of the move saying “there was a little bit of fear that a lot of this stuff [PACU] was going to be moving away, specifically towards Portland.”\(^1\)\(^3\) Despite initial their fears most Forest Grove residents have now come to appreciate the connection between Forest Grove and Hillsboro. Forest Grove government leaders have used PACU’s expansion to Hillsboro as motivation to improve relationships and infrastructure between the two communities. According to Mayor Truax, the expansion of Pacific University can be credited with bringing the region together, ”Pacific University is having a regional face about it, and that’s something we not only have come to accept, but come to embrace in Forest Grove.”

Pacific University’s expansion efforts demonstrate both the anticipated and the unanticipated benefits of expanding a university to neighboring communities. The expansion has delivered benefits to the community through employment and educational opportunities. Pacific University’s decision to develop the Healthcare Professionals Campus in nearby Hillsboro also helped bring about a new sense of regional community. This case study also shows that the new regional connection between Forest Grove and Hillsboro resulted in increased transit ridership as well as local transit infrastructure improvements. Pacific University’s successful expansion perfectly illustrates the shared benefits that can be achieved when a university reaches out to neighboring communities.

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Temecula Education Center – Temecula, California

The Temecula Education Center (TEC) was originally proposed in 2006. According to the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, the original proposal called for the development of a multi-school mixed-use facility on a city-owned 32-acre lot. After the initial proposal, the following six universities expressed interest in leasing space in the facility, California Baptist University, Concordia University, CSU San Marcos, Mount San Jacinto College, Point Loma Nazarene University, and UC Riverside. Fortunately, the proposed development project contained enough square footage for all six universities to lease space.

Temecula was able to attract multiple universities to the region for two reasons. First, the Temecula community strongly supported the TEC project. Second, the proposed site was located on land that the city of Temecula was willing to sell. These two elements of the proposal certainly made Temecula more appealing to prospective universities. Temecula city officials, with support from the public, actively pursued several universities. The city even hosted celebratory luncheons with university representatives when agreements were reached. The luncheons also served as a platform for publically announcing new details about the project. One announcement revealed that the city of Temecula would reduce the cost of the land if developers included 288 affordable housing unit apartments in the site plans. The affordable housing units certainly provided an additional benefit to the city of Temecula. Discounting the price of the land in exchange for affordable housing ensured that the City of Temecula would have at least partial say in the development project.

Unfortunately, despite significant community support and interest from multiple universities, the project fell flat. According to the OC Register, the project was abandoned “after the developer failed to make the deadline to close escrow on the Temecula Education Center.” Although the project ultimately lost traction, the TEC remains an excellent case study because it demonstrates two important things. Firstly, the TEC project shows that towns can attract development from universities in neighboring

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communities by offering city-owned land. Secondly, the TEC project demonstrates that it is possible to bring multiple universities together in a single mixed-use project. Although Temecula was unsuccessful in developing the TEC, the city was still able to attract four of the six universities that originally expressed interest. Temecula successfully reached agreements with California Baptist University, Concordia University, CSU San Marcos, and Mount San Jacinto College.

The city of Temecula was successful in attracting universities because they targeted schools that were already interested in expansion. Of the six interested schools four already had specific funding dedicated to expansion. In 2001 California Baptist University dedicated $200 million specifically to improvement and expansion projects. In 2006 Concordia University decided to devote funding to expansion efforts by entering into a 10-year lease with the proposed TEC project. Similarly, Mount San Jacinto College dedicated funding to expansion efforts by way of entering into a three-year $3 million renewable lease at the proposed TEC. Additionally, CSU San Marcos devoted funding to expansion efforts in the early 2000s and eventually did open a center in Temecula. However, CSU San Marcos quickly outgrew their original Temecula facility and the school once again devoted money to expansion efforts. CSU San Marcos was reportedly prepared to devote approximately $3 million to the TEC project. Although the TEC project ultimately failed, the city of Temecula was still able to achieve the goal of bringing higher education opportunities to the Temecula Valley. Thanks to the efforts of city officials each of the remaining four universities all currently have facilities located in Temecula.

Although each of the four schools had prior interest in expansion efforts, Temecula officials deserve most of the credit for solidifying the agreements. In the case of CSU San Marcos’ expansion, the Temecula Unified School District helped by leasing an abandoned elementary school to the university for a rate of $1 per year for 10 years. Additionally, the City of Temecula approved a $3 million redevelopment grant to help CSU San Marcos develop their new facility. In order to keep California Baptist

University, city officials helped the university find a new campus in Temecula when the TEC project fell through. The city was able to lease the university two abandoned suites in the Temecula Promenade Mall. The prominent location of the new facility is beneficial to the university because it provides excellent exposure for the school. Similarly, the new location is beneficial to the community because it makes higher education more accessible to residents. Temecula officials were successful in keeping four of the six universities because they continued to pursue them even after the TEC fell through.

**Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana – Elkhart / Goshen, Indiana**

The Ivy Tech Community College of Indiana system offers college-level courses and trade training courses to approximately 99,000 Indiana residents. This case study focuses on Ivy Tech’s Goshen and Elkhart campuses. Ivy Tech’s Goshen center offers a wide range of curriculum options to approximately 1,300 of Goshen’s 32,000 residents. Ivy Tech’s Elkhart campus has slightly higher enrolled population of approximately 1,700 students. These two campuses help provide higher education opportunities to residents who live on the fringes of Indiana’s major cities. Both campuses garner the vast majority of funding from both local and state government.

Ivy Tech first opened their small Elkhart Center in the early 2000s. The main goal of the center is to reduce regional unemployment by producing a skilled workforce trained specifically to fill high demand jobs. The center offers Associate Degrees in subjects like Accounting, Automotive Technology, and Healthcare Support. The degrees offered at the center are based specifically on the needs of the Elkhart community. Although standard college courses are available, most of the courses offered are certificate courses. The certificate programs help Elkhart residents get quick training in high-demand entry-level professions. According to Ivy Tech, approximately 66% of Ivy

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Tech grads are employed full-time. This shows that most Ivy Tech students do not have trouble finding employment. Furthermore, since the degrees and certificates are based on community employment needs, it is likely that most Ivy Tech graduates find employment locally.

In 2010 Ivy Tech constructed a new $20 million campus only five miles away from the Elkhart Center in the town of Goshen. The Goshen Instruction Center was built in order to help mitigate the problem of overcrowding at the Elkhart Center. The facility was funded by money allocated by Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels. The new facility houses six classrooms and numerous labs for specialty courses in HVAC repair, manufacturing, nursing, and welding. Like the Elkhart Center, courses at the Goshen Center are designed specifically to help fill regional employment needs. The community-based curriculum ensures that the college and the community both benefit from the relationship.

**Proposal**

City officials should address Dixon’s shortcomings in educational and employment opportunity in order to positively change the trajectory of the community’s economic status. Data suggests that Dixon residents struggle in two regards; low educational attainment and lack of employment. Addressing these two shortcomings will help ensure the future economic success of Dixon. The following recommendations use Dixon’s available land as a tool to help build a mutually beneficial relationship between Dixon and UC Davis. The funding for these recommendations will be discussed at the end of the section.

1. Develop university-oriented housing and shopping complexes in Dixon city limits, with alternative transit options.
2. Expand UC Davis with a satellite campus in Dixon city limits.
3. Construct a UC Davis-affiliated crop sciences facility and practice fields on the available land in Dixon.

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Implementing these recommendations will help give the Dixon community access to higher education. Additionally, these recommendations will also help create a mutually beneficial relationship between the Dixon community and UC Davis. If successful, the relationship will help raise Dixon’s educational attainment and strengthen the local workforce. In return UC Davis will have the opportunity to expand their brand and impact a greater number of people within the region.

**University Housing and Shopping Complexes**

Dixon owns approximately 450 acres of available land for development. The property is located in the northeast quadrant of the town (see Figure 6). UC Davis is just four miles away from the land’s northern boundary. The property’s close proximity to UC Davis’ main campus makes it an ideal location for both student-family housing and non-traditional student housing. In 2011 the university opened the West Village student housing development. West Village was constructed with the specific goal of creating a zero net energy community on the UC Davis Campus.\(^{26}\) The West Village project provides new housing to approximately 3,500 UC Davis student and faculty members. Unfortunately, students with families and non-traditional students at UC Davis have been left out of the project. Although the project originally included 350 student-family housing units, concerns with the regional real estate market resulted in the exclusion of family housing from the project.\(^{27}\) This suggests that UC Davis is still in need of single-family housing units.

The 450 acres of available land in Dixon could serve as the ideal site for single-family student and non-traditional student housing units. There are three main benefits of developing the housing units in Dixon. First, the quality and quantity of the available land is more than sufficient for the project. Second, the property has immediate access to the region’s only major freeway, reducing commute time between the two locations. Third, the landowners are receptive to the idea of large-scale, multi-use development projects. Combined, these three benefits make a compelling case for developing university housing units in Dixon. The remainder of this section focuses on how these

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three benefits will help expedite the development project. Additionally, the project will have community benefits as described below.

Figure 6. Dixon’s Available 450-acre lot (Source: Google Earth 2014)

The quality and quantity of Dixon’s available land has been the main driving force for proposed development since the early 2000s. In 2001 the Magna Entertainment Corporation proposed a development project that would have occupied approximately 260 acres of the available 450-acre lot. Magna suggested that their 260-acre development project would spark future development on the remainder of the available land. The Dixon City Council approved Magna’s proposed land use in 2006 and passed ordinance No. 06-008, which rezoned the 260-acre space to a Planned Development (PD) zone. Although Dixon voters ultimately struck down the project in 2007, the site is still a strong candidate for development. According to Dixon officials, recent infrastructure projects improved the quality of the town’s northeast quadrant by bringing water the

The existing water supply certainly reduces the costs associated with developing housing units and shopping complexes on the lot. Additionally, the quantity of available acres helps increase the potential for large-scale university-affiliated development.

The property has immediate access to the only major freeway in the region. The access to the freeway reduces the commuting distance between the potential development and the university. The short distance between the two locations will produce relatively short commute times for residents. Additionally, the freeway access and the short distance will help keep transportation costs down for residents. The property’s freeway access could also facilitate bus/shuttle transit between the two sites. The UC Davis bus system, Unitrans, is a student-operated transit system that helps approximately 3 million passengers get to and from campus each year. Unitrans uses 49 buses to service the 14 routes in Davis. The Unitrans system could adopt a new Dixon route to help residents commute to and from campus. Based on Sacramento transit data, the new route would only increase Unitrans’ annual operational costs by approximately $480,000 per year (see Figure 7).

**Figure 7. Sacramento Bus Operation Costs (Source: National Transit Database)**

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<table>
<thead>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per Hour</td>
<td>$119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per 14-Hour Work Day</td>
<td>$1,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per 6-Day Work Week</td>
<td>$9,996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per 288-Day Work Year</td>
<td>$479,808</td>
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Dixon city officials have made it publically known that the 450-acre lot is open for large-scale development. City officials have demonstrated a willingness to help developers navigate red tape as long as the project aims to benefit the community. The construction of university housing and shopping complexes would provide benefits to the Dixon community. Dixon City Council approved Magna’s 2006 proposal primarily because it ensured local job growth. Developing shopping complexes on the land would add to Dixon’s job growth and help stimulate the local economy. Using the Temecula Education Center’s proposed employment figures as a benchmark, Dixon could see the

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http://www.ci.dixon.ca.us/DocumentCenter/Home/View/15

http://asu.ucdavis.edu/units/unitrans/

33 National Transit Database Federal Transit Administration. *Sacramento 2010-2011*.
http://www.ntdprogram.gov/ntdprogram/
addition of 25 new jobs if the recommended housing project includes a shopping complex. Dixon city officials have indicated that they are receptive to projects that produce even higher job growth figures. Magna’s 2006 proposal would have employed an estimated 350 jobs on their 260-acre facility. This suggests that officials are open to large-scale development projects in the town’s northeast quadrant. This further suggests that the university would experience limited local opposition if they proposed additional development projects after the completion of the student housing and shopping complexes.

**UC Davis Satellite Campus**

The 450-acre lot in Dixon’s northeast quadrant is an ideal location for a UC Davis satellite campus because of two important features; its geographic location would help UC Davis expand its brand into the Solano county region, and the size of the lot allows for the development of large-scale university facilities.

The Solano County cities of Dixon, Vacaville, and Fairfield are located in what can be described as a four-year education desert. Solano County has one four-year university, California Maritime Academy (CSUM). CSUM has a total enrolled population of 974 students. The university only offers six undergraduate major options, Business Administration, Facilities Engineering Technology, Global Studies and Maritime Affairs, Marine Engineering Technology, Marine Transportation, and Mechanical Engineering. Unfortunately, the regional maritime industry no longer hires at the same rate it once did. With the exception of CSUM, the closest four-year universities are in the following counties: Alameda (UC Berkeley), Contra Costa (Saint Mary’s College), Sacramento (CSU Sacramento), Sonoma (Sonoma State), and Yolo (UC Davis). The Dixon community does not have immediate access to a four-year university. Of the previously mentioned universities, Sonoma State is the furthest from Dixon at 62 miles, and UC Davis is the closest at 8 miles. UC Davis’ close proximity to Dixon would suggest the potential for a regional connection. However, to date, there is no visible connection between UC Davis and the Dixon community. The development of a satellite campus in Dixon will help strengthen the relationship between Dixon and Davis.

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Eight miles of farmland separate Dixon and UC Davis. However, despite their close proximity the two entities have always existed independently of one another. Developing a satellite campus in Dixon would help create a mutually beneficial relationship between UC Davis and Dixon. In exchange for job growth and immediate access to higher education, UC Davis would see its brand expand into a new region. With regard to high education, the Dixon region is essentially unclaimed land. Expanding the UC Davis brand to the Dixon community will help increase the university’s regional prominence. The university expansion could also attract new state and federal funding.

The developable land in Dixon’s northeast quadrant is large enough to house university projects of substantial size. In fact, the entire 419-acre UCLA campus could actually fit on the site and still have 31 acres to spare.\(^35\) There is enough land on the available lot to comfortably fit a multi-structure satellite campus with adequate remaining land for future additional development. The university could conceivably construct three 20,000 square foot facilities using less than a quarter of the available land. Based on the construction costs of the newly completed Sacramento City College satellite campus on the UC Davis campus, we can estimate the cost of each 20,000 square foot facility to be approximately $7.5 million dollars. In this example the Los Rios Community College District covered 100% of the costs for the facility.\(^36\) However, UC Davis spent approximately $17 million in addition to bring infrastructure and utilities to the West Village site. The Dixon property already has access to water and power. This means that the university does not have to spend several million dollars to provide basic utilities. The existing utilities and the size of the Dixon lot provide UC Davis with a number of relatively low cost possibilities for developing a satellite campus.

Building a UC Davis satellite campus in Dixon would help bring the community some much needed exposure to higher education. As previously mentioned, Dixon residents struggle with educational attainment. In fact, the town ranks below the national average in virtually every educational attainment category on the American Community Survey. A satellite campus would help the Dixon community build a local connection with higher education. The exposure to higher education and the subsequent connection

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between the community and the institution would certainly help Dixon battle its education attainment struggles. Helping Dixon residents achieve higher levels of educational attainment should be the goal of all neighboring collegiate institutions. Data indicates that college graduates earn nearly $15,000 more per year than non-college graduates. Offering college courses within city limits would make higher education more accessible for Dixon residents. This suggests that offering college courses could result in Dixon’s young population achieving higher levels of educational attainment and earning higher average incomes. UC Davis should act on the opportunity to partner with Dixon, if for no other reason than to have a stronger influence on the region.

**Crop Science Facilities**

Dixon officials should work with the UC Davis College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences to bring a crop science facility to Dixon’s northeast quadrant. The land is a very suitable location for a crop science facility because it has access to utilities and is already being used as farmland. Having existing farmland with immediate access to utilities means that the project would be less expensive for the university to develop. If carefully proposed, the project could benefit the local community in two significant ways. First, Dixon officials could ensure job growth if they propose a local hiring agreement, in exchange for the lower land costs. Secondly, Dixon could potentially also receive university-sponsored public outreach projects like crop science education. The recommended facility could also serve as a relatively low cost community relations project for the university.

Although Dixon’s northeast is suitable for development, the land is currently used for agricultural purposes. During the summer months the land is used for tomato and corn production. In the spring the land is used to grow alfalfa. The lot’s agricultural production capabilities make it an ideal site for a crop science facility. The university could use the land to practice new farming techniques. The land is already fully equipped with a water supply and irrigation infrastructure. These attributes make the site an ideal location for a crop science facility, with a relatively low start-up cost.

If Dixon can successfully attract the development of a UC Davis-affiliated crop sciences facility, city officials need to ensure that the facility benefits the local

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community. As previously mentioned, the city can ensure community benefits during the land transfer negotiation by signing agreements that ensure local hiring and university-sponsored community outreach projects. Outreach projects should include agricultural crop science educational clinics and urban gardening techniques clinics. The crop science clinics could help Dixon farmers increase regional agricultural productivity. Data suggests that regional economies tend to thrive when universities engage in local research and development projects. The crop science facility would certainly help boost Dixon’s agricultural economy. Additionally, the facility could help ensure that Dixon farmers are aware of the newest agricultural technology advances. Offering urban gardening techniques clinics to the Dixon community could help promote more self-sustaining lifestyles. City officials should significantly reduce the cost of the land if the university agrees to the terms above. Such an agreement would ensure that both parties benefit.

**Funding Packages**

UC Davis recently received private, state, and federal funding to help cover the costs of the West Village Project. According to UC Davis, the university “garnered grants totaling nearly $7.5 million in support of the West Village Energy Initiative.” The California Energy Commission, the U.S. Department of Energy, and the California Solar Initiative all made significant contributions to the university’s energy initiative. UC Davis itself was able to contribute $17 million towards development costs. The university is set to recover their portion of the development costs by placing a surcharge on residential utility bills. Additional funding for the project came by way the Los Rios Community College District. The Los Rios District funded the project by using state apportioned money, general fund, and state lottery fund money.

Dixon could seek grant funding for each of the three recommended projects. If the UC Davis satellite campus aims to be LEED certified, both Dixon and UC Davis could seek funding from the California Energy Commission and the U.S. Department of Energy. Given the scale of the satellite campus project, it is reasonable to assume that these government agencies would approve funding comparable to $7.5 million granted to

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http://edq.sagepub.com/content/24/3/210.full.pdf+html
the West Village project. Remaining funding for the satellite campus could come by way of the university and private investors. Similar funding strategies could be used to support the university housing and shopping complexes. However, additional funding for this project could come from state and federal affordable housing grants. Specifically, Dixon could seek funding from the California Department of Housing and Community Development through a number of Affordable Housing Innovation Program grants. The UC Davis-affiliated crop science facility could be funded through the university’s general fund. However, additional funding for the project could come from the California Department of Food and Agriculture’s Specialty Crop Block Grant. In fact, in 2013 UC Davis agriculture projects received approximately $3.74 million from the Specialty Crop Block Grant. Additional funding could come from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Grant, or the Outreach and Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers Competitive Grants. The evidence suggests that it is possible for Dixon and UC Davis to collect and provide enough funding to cover significant portions of the development costs.

**Conclusion**

The proposed recommendations have shown how the city of Dixon can form a mutually beneficial relationship with UC Davis through development projects. The recommendations were designed to help Dixon’s young population achieve higher levels of educational attainment, higher annual incomes, and increased local employment opportunities. Additionally, the recommendations were designed to help UC Davis complete their stalled student-family housing development project. Fully implementing the three recommendations will help Dixon recover from the missed economy opportunity associated with Magna project in 2006.

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43 Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance. *United States Department of Agriculture: Outreach Assistance for Socially Disadvantaged Farmers and Ranchers*. 2014 https://www.cfda.gov/index?s=program&mode=form&tab=core&id=64de67ec5762cc4503928ada51a3149
Although the recommendations will not necessarily generate large revenues for the city, they will help strengthen the local economy and make Dixon a more viable candidate for future development projects. UC Davis development projects could help rejuvenate Dixon’s relatively stagnant economy by generating state and federal funding for local development projects. The region’s limited access to higher education makes it an ideal candidate for university outreach. Dixon would see tremendous growth even with the implementation of only one of the three recommendations. Introducing higher education facilities to the community would be an excellent investment for the university. Developing university facilities in Dixon would help UC Davis expand its brand beyond Yolo County. Bringing UC Davis development to Dixon would also help give the university a more prominent role in the regional economy. UC Davis needs to create a partnership with Dixon in order to show that the university is interested in investing in and improving the region.

Any partnership between Dixon and UC Davis would result in significant improvements to the area. However, Dixon city officials are responsible for taking the first steps in forming a partnership. UC Davis has ample land available to them in Davis. As such, they have little inherent interest in expanding to the Dixon area. This report has outlined a compelling case for bringing UC Davis development projects to the Dixon area. It is the responsibility of the Dixon City Council to successfully implement these recommendations. The Dixon City Council should move forward with these recommendations to ensure that the Dixon community has a viable economic future, and can successfully attract residents and commercial development alike.
References


California Department of Housing and Community Development. HCD’s Loans, Grants, and Enterprise Zone Programs. 2014. http://www.hcd.ca.gov/fa/

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Google Earth Desktop Edition. *Counties Map: Sacramento, Solano, and Yolo Region 38°26’42.25” N 121°48’46.44” W* May 29, 2014


