

Mt. SAC says it would cost \$14.5M to move planned parking structure

By [Richard Irwin](#), San Gabriel Valley Tribune

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Moving the parking garage planned for Mount San Antonio College would cost \$14.5 million. Courtesy of Mt. San Antonio College

Mount San Antonio College trustees learned it would cost \$14.5 million to move the controversial 2,200 spot parking structure planned for the community college.

Another study to downsize the \$45 million parking garage said it would cost almost \$6 million to eliminate one of the parking levels in one section. That would only cut 200 stalls.

“The cost is not feasible to redo the parking structure,” concluded Mt. SAC President and CEO Bill Scroggins. “After the multi-millions spent on the design, it would not be a good shepherding of tax dollars.”

Mt. SAC’s Director of Facilities Gary Nellesen explained the costs involved to move the parking garage from Parking Lot A to Lot F. His staff calculated it would take three years and \$14,470,000 to relocate the parking garage now planned off Mountaineer Road along Edinger Way. And the easier option of cutting one section would cost \$5,820,000.

“The biggest cost would be inflation caused by the delay,” Nellesen said. “We use the same number we use for all our projects ... about 4 percent per year. Because this redesign effort would take 18 months, we’re figuring about a year and a half of cost inflation on the rest of the structure.”

That would add \$2.4 million to the cost of the smaller structure. Deleting one level and replacing it with surface parking would save \$2 million.

“We’d have to pay for a redesign of the darn thing,” Nellesen said.

He said the college learned a lesson back in 2003, when bids for the new science building came in over budget.

“We did an extensive effort to reduce the cost of the project. By the time we got it approved and put it up for bid, we got less for more money,” Nellesen recalled.

He said using Lot F would add 40 months to the project in order to start all over again with the environmental impact report, new design and the state approval process. Inflation would add \$5.6 million to the costs.

His department estimates it would cost \$2.6 million to redesign the parking structure and \$400,000 to get approval from the Division of the State Architect.

“It would also take a significant amount of work on Temple Avenue to get the traffic to work,” Nellesen said.

This includes a signal and right turn lane for more than \$1 million. Reconstruction of the pedestrian bridge across Bonita including an elevator tower for \$1 million. Vehicle circulation improvements would also cost \$1 million.

In addition, the entire lot would have to be closed for construction, losing 1,300 student parking spaces. Temporary parking would have to be found.

“The only way I can see us doing that is to park students on the site of the planned solar power plant. Doing so would delay construction of the power plant, losing the \$750,000 incentives we have qualified for in that project,” Nellesen said.

He said the \$14.5 million cost estimate to move the parking garage may be low. “They’re certainly not high, the construction market is heating up again,” Nellesen said.

“My feeling is the sooner we build the things we have on the boards the better. Delaying things is really going to expose us to a lot of cost inflation in construction similar to what we saw in 2003, 2004,” the facilities director concluded.

The report infuriated two residents of Timberline, who have been fighting construction of the new parking structure across the street from their homes for the past year.

“I’m appalled, you’re continuing to do the same thing, sideline us,” said Layla Abu Taleb. “The City of Walnut Council came here, all five members ... to tell you that the community doesn’t want this.”

The Mt. SAC trustees agreed there should be more dialogue between the city and the community college. President Scroggins said he would contact city officials to set up a meeting.

“We have to provide parking for our students, we’ve been talking about this for many, many years,” said trustee Manuel Baca. “We asked the administration for more information and they brought it to us. ... We need more engagement with city council.”

Board President David Hall and Trustee Fred Chyr agreed that talking to city officials was important.

“I’m thinking of our primary obligation to our students and our taxpayers,” said trustee Roseanne Bader. “In good faith, we’ve had our staff look at the other options. I think because of the cost and delay, I’d be against moving the parking structure to Lot F.”