

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – WASHINGTON, DC
APRIL 9 – 11, 2024**

**OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE SUSTAINABILITY, INNOVATION, AND SOCIAL INCLUSION –
SOCAL OASIS PARK**

ISSUE: Riverside and San Bernardino counties, the Inland Empire (IE), is one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, projected to grow 44% by 2050. Additionally, it has one of California’s most diverse and youngest populations. However, in comparison to other regions in the state, it has faced a lack of investment.

The region thrives with talent, particularly in innovation. The number of patents generated by inventors residing in the IE from 2009 to 2020 is comparable to those from more developed areas like Orange County. However, most Small Business Technology Transfer-funded companies in Southern California are located near the coast, where there are higher concentrations of high-paying jobs. The Inland Empire is experiencing a continual increase in job commuting from the region to surrounding coastal areas. This provides evidence and motivation to create an environment for incubation and acceleration of start-up companies and technology development around Riverside. The SoCal OASIS Park will help address this issue.

ACTION: The Monday Morning Group strongly encourages Congress and the Administration to support UCR’s forthcoming funding requests to support the SoCal OASIS Park. Specifically, UCR will seek Congressionally Directed Spending in the Senate and Community Project Funding in the House, totaling up to \$14 million. This funding will support laboratories, research instrumentation, and ancillary equipment for Phase I of the SoCal OASIS™ Park, which includes:

- A world-class atmospheric chamber facility that will enable transformative advances in fundamental atmospheric science and engineering, including interactions between anthropogenic, biogenic, and pyrogenic emissions and impacts on human and environmental ecosystems.
- A state-of-the-art research and education laboratory to address key challenges at the nexus of mobility and the environment.
- A next generation research and education laboratory to address intelligent and sustainable energy management systems.

BACKGROUND: The University of California, Riverside (UCR) is a leading R1 research university with a long history of renowned expertise in research and innovation in fields including air quality, agriculture, natural resources, community health issues, sustainable transportation, and climate change. Its excellence in research has been recognized with its induction into the prestigious Association of American Universities in 2023. Importantly, UCR is also a Minority Serving Institution fully committed to contributing to the social mobility of its students.

The creation of the SoCal OASIS Park will bring additional resources to the region, facilitating the ongoing development of state-of-the-art and scalable solutions to national and global challenges within UCR’s areas of expertise. It will also help train a diverse next generation of researchers, innovators, and leaders who understand the significance of these challenges. The SoCal OASIS Park will create high-paying jobs and contribute to the overall economic development of the Inland Empire.

The SoCal OASIS Park project involves not only UCR, but also local governments and agencies, the private sector, and community organizations. It will provide a combination of research laboratories, a technology startup incubator, leasable office space, training facilities, and community spaces. While also serving as a catalyst for public-private partnerships, technology transfer, and the creation, attraction, and growth of innovation-based companies. The location of the SoCal OASIS Park in the City of Riverside Innovation District and just a short distance from both the UCR campus and the California Air Resources Board’s (CARB) new state-of-the-art Southern California Headquarters. This project will propel CARB’s renowned research and vehicle emissions testing into the future. Students from local universities and community colleges will have the opportunity for

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internships and apprenticeships, while pursuing their academic degrees and attractive post-graduation employment opportunities.

UCR has selected a design-build team to construct the first phase of this project. The amount fully spent or obligated as of February 2024 is approximately \$7.9 million out of \$68 million secured, mostly from the State of California. UCR expects demolition of the existing (vacant) building on the site to begin in May or June 2024 and will be followed by the immediate construction of the new building. The project will generate hundreds of jobs during the 2-year construction period, with completion expected in mid- to late-2026.

The SoCal OASIS Park fits under the umbrella of the broader SoCal OASIS initiative. It will house a set of shared facilities that convene synergistic research talents and incubator space for technology transfer and technology-focused startup creation activities. Researchers from academia, industry, and regulatory agencies will collaborate to address today's critical environmental topics. The investment will leverage the university's existing strengths, the University of California's Carbon Neutrality Initiative, the City of Riverside's Innovation District, and the State of California's investment recent CARB facility relocation that is in close proximity to UCR's campus.¹ It will offer a unique opportunity for our highly diverse, disadvantaged region to reduce climate change impacts and local pollution levels, and increase prosperity and resiliency by creating innovative products, generating entrepreneurial activity, and surge local high-tech employment opportunities. Through collaboration among academic, government, and industry partners, the SoCal OASIS Park will further transform the livability and vitality of the IE.

While the funds needed for the construction of the SoCal OASIS Park Phase I building have already been secured, the decision was made during the early planning stages to maximize square footage by not using any of the available funds for the research laboratory equipment. UCR is now exploring several avenues to secure equipment funds, including through requests of Congressionally Directed Spending in the Senate and Community Project Funding in the House.

¹ <https://inlandempire.us/city-of-riverside-embraces-innovation-district-approach-to-creating-jobs/>