3.13 Recreation

As a result of the analysis undertaken in the Initial Study for the proposed 2009 Master Plan, the LACCD determined that the proposed project may result in environmental impacts to recreation. Therefore, this issue is being carried forward for detailed analysis in this SEIR. This analysis was undertaken to identify opportunities to avoid, reduce, or otherwise mitigate potential significant impacts to recreation and to identify potential alternatives.

The analysis of recreation consists of a summary of the regulatory framework that guides the decision-making process, the existing conditions at the proposed 2009 Master Plan area, thresholds for determining if the proposed 2009 Master Plan would result in significant impacts, anticipated impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative), mitigation measures, and level of significance after mitigation. The potential for impacts to recreation at the proposed 2009 Master Plan site have been evaluated in accordance with Appendix G of CEQA Guidelines.¹

3.13.1 Setting

3.13.1.1 Regulatory Setting

Federal

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 was established to assist federal, state, and local governments in the acquisition and/or development of public outdoor recreation facilities. Administered at the state level by the California Department of Parks and Recreation, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants can provide up to 50 percent of the allowable costs for approved acquisition or development projects. Administrative policies, procedures, and guidelines for the LWCF grants awarded to the states by the Department of Interior, National Park Service are provided in the LWCF Manual.

Lopez Dam Basin Master Plan

The Lopez Dam Basin Master Plan, prepared by the ACOE, presents an overall view of the present and proposed uses for federally owned land in the Lopez Dam Basin. Land designated for recreation development may be leased to local sponsors interested in developing, operating, and maintaining recreation facilities within specified areas. The Master Plan describes all existing recreation facilities, and potential future recreation opportunities by any future recreation lessees.² The Lopez Dam Basin Master Plan designates the ACOE parcel that is part of the proposed Athletic Fields for recreational uses. The property is located within Planning Area 1, which calls for intensive recreation with potential for high-impact recreation.

¹ California Code of Regulations, Title 24, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387. Available at http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines/
### State

**Government Code Section 53094**

Government Code, Section 53094, gives the governing board of a school district, by a two-thirds vote of its members, the authority to render a city zoning ordinance inapplicable to a proposed use of property by the school district, provided that the use is for classroom facilities.

**Public Park Preservation Act of 1971**

The California Public Park Preservation Act of 1971 provides that no agency of the state may acquire any real property, which is in use as a public park at the time of acquisition, for the purpose of utilizing the property for any non-park purpose, unless the acquiring entity pays or transfers to the legislative body of the entity operating the park sufficient compensation or land, or both, to enable the operating entity to replace the park land and its facilities. This Act authorizes changes in the general character and location of the park, if certain requirements are met.

### Regional

**County of Los Angeles General Plan**

The County of Los Angeles General Plan was prepared in 1980 with several elements being revised and updated in subsequent years. The Streamlined General Plan was prepared by Los Angeles County in January 1993 to provide a simplified version of the General Plan and ease user access to its key components. The county has also made available its 2008 Draft General Plan, which is expected to be finalized in July 2009. The General Plan contains guidelines for major planning areas which link countywide policies to policies of cities and unincorporated communities.

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan was last updated in 2008 and sets forth countywide policies for open space resources within the County of Los Angeles. The Conservation and Open Space Element addresses open space, parks, and recreation; biological resources; agricultural resources; mineral and energy resources; scenic resources; historical, cultural, and paleontological resources; and water resources. The policies set forth in this element are based on the need to conserve natural resources while also meeting the public’s desire for open space experiences and long-term use of resources. Applicable policies from the Conservation and Open Space Element include the following:

- Policy C/OS 1.1: Promote the preservation of open space areas throughout the County;
- Policy C/OS 1.2: Support the acquisition of new open space areas throughout the County;
- Policy C/OS 2.1: Develop and expand regional and local parkland in the County;
- Policy C/OS 2.6: Require projects to include well-designed and accessible community space;
- Policy C/OS 3.2: Promote joint-use agreements to increase and enhance park and recreation opportunities;
- Policy C/OS 5.8: Maintain watercourses and wetlands in a natural state, unaltered by grading, fill, or diversion activities;
- Policy C/OS 9.1: Expand the production and use of alternative energy resources; and
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- Policy C/OS 9.3: Require all new development to employ passive solar techniques and active solar technologies.5

**County of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Strategic Asset Management Plan for 2020**

In April 2004, the Department of Parks and Recreation developed the Strategic Asset Management Plan for 2020 (SAMP). The SAMP inventoried county park and recreation needs, made recommendations for meeting park and recreational needs, and provided a policy guide for park development throughout the County. The SAMP provides a detailed analysis of parkland and open-space issues on a district level, and recommends policy direction for where the county should implement resources to prevent future deficiencies in parks and open space.4

Currently, there are eleven new parks being planned within Los Angeles County, which together total 233 acres of active park space and 2,692 acres of open space.5 There are also 18 parks under construction, either under expansion or development.6 The completion of the development of the new parks and construction projects would add additional park acreage for regional recreational service. However, information from the Los Angeles County General Plan indicates that the SAMP report found that by 2020 the county will be approximately 4,600 acres short of the desired four acres of local parkland per 1,000 county residents.

**Local**

**City of Los Angeles General Plan**

The city’s General Plan Framework is a comprehensive, long range document containing purposes, policies and programs for the development of the City of Los Angeles. The Open Space and Conservation Element of the city’s General Plan Framework defines goals, objectives, and policies for the provision, management, and conservation of Los Angeles’ open-space resources, and addresses the outdoor recreation needs of the city’s residents. The city’s objective for recreational resources includes the following:

- Objective 6.2: Maximize the use of the City's existing open space network and recreation facilities by enhancing those facilities and providing connections, particularly from targeted growth areas, to the existing regional and community open space system.7

The LACCD property proposed for Athletic Field development by the Master Plan, is designated by the City of Los Angeles as Open Space/Agriculture, which can be used for parks and recreational

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7 City of Los Angeles. 2001. General Plan Framework Open Space and Conservation Element. Available at: http://cityplanning.lacity.org/cwd/framwk/chapters/06/06.htm
facilities, nature reserves, closed sanitary landfill sites, public water supply reservoirs, and water conservation areas.

**Sylmar Community Plan**

The Sylmar Community Plan sets forth goals, objectives, policies, and implementation programs that pertain to the Sylmar Community Plan area. In the Sylmar Community Plan area, public parks and recreation areas are managed by the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department and by the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department. Applicable policies from the Sylmar Community Plan include the following:

- 4-1.1 Preserve and improve the existing recreational facilities and park space.
- 4-1.3 Encourage cooperation between the Los Angeles Unified School District and the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department to provide the recreational facilities for the community.

The City of Los Angeles General Plan has established a parkland-to-population ratio of four acres per 1,000 residents. According to the City of Los Angeles 2000 Census Statistical Profile, the Sylmar Community Plan area population estimate of 69,624 together with the planned standard of four acres of parkland per 1,000 residents results in an existing parkland requirement of 278.5 acres. The Sylmar Community Plan states that currently there are no neighborhood parks in Sylmar. To remedy the deficiency of parkland, the Sylmar Community Plan is recommending six new neighborhood parks which would include additional park acreage for neighborhood recreational use.

**3.13.1.2 Environmental Setting**

**Regional**

There are two regional parks and two community parks located in the Sylmar Community Plan area in which the proposed 2009 Master Plan is located. The two regional parks are El Cariso Community Regional Park and Veterans Memorial Community Regional Park, both owned and operated by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation. The two community parks are Stetson Ranch Park consisting of 29 acres, and Sylmar Recreation Center consisting of 20 acres.

Several parks exist within a 3.0-mile radius that serves both the community of Sylmar and the nearby City of San Fernando (Figure 3.13-1, Local and Regional Parks). These parks are:

1. El Cariso Community Regional Park;
2. Veterans Memorial County Park;
3. Stetson Ranch Park;

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Figure 3.13-1, Local and Regional Parks
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4. Sylmar Recreation Center;
5. Wilson Canyon Park;
6. Sylmar Park;
7. Layne Park;
8. Pioneer Park;
9. Recreation Park; and
10. Hubert Humphrey Memorial Park.

Currently, the LACCD and ACOE properties proposed for use as LAMC Athletic Fields are used by local community members for passive recreational uses such as walking, mountain-bike riding, and other outdoor activities. These parcels do not contain any developed active recreational facilities by the city, county, or ACOE.

3.13.2 Significance Thresholds

As noted in the Initial Study, for the purposes of this EIR, and in accordance with Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, an impact to recreation is considered significant if the proposed project would:

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; and
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

3.13.3 Environmental Impact Analysis

3.13.3.1 Methodology

The analysis described below is based on a desktop inventory conducted to determine where recreational uses would be sensitive to the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed 2009 Master Plan. Information was compiled through regional/local maps and planning documents. The Los Angeles County General Plan, City of Los Angeles General Plan, Sylmar Community Plan, and the ACOE Lopez Dam Basin Master Plan were evaluated to provide insight into the recreational goals and regulations for the proposed 2009 Master Plan sites and surrounding communities. The analysis also evaluated the proposed 2009 Master Plan’s consistency with applicable city, county, and federal plans and policies related to recreation and any potential impacts resulting from construction of the Athletic Fields in a previously passive open space.

Since recreational facilities with the potential to have an adverse physical effect on the environment are proposed as part of the Master Plan, discussion of the second significance threshold is addressed here in addition to the remaining sections of this EIR.
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3.13.3.2 Campus Impacts

Construction Impacts

*Impacts on Existing Neighborhood and Regional Parks*

Construction of the proposed campus areas would involve site preparation activities including demolition, grading and excavation, as well as construction and removal of temporary facilities and construction of permanent facilities. These activities would occur on the campus during weekdays and would not restrict parking for, or access to recreational facilities adjacent to the proposed campus sites, nor would staging of construction equipment or activities occur within any parkland or recreational facility. Each construction location of the proposed campus areas would be secured with temporary fencing to separate the construction activity from the adjacent El Cariso Community Regional Park. Construction crews working on the Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements would not use the El Cariso Community Regional Park in such a manner that any physical deterioration of facilities would occur. As such, construction on the Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements would not result in a loss of open space/parkland or organized recreation opportunities. No construction impacts on parklands would occur.

*Impacts from Construction or Expansion on Recreational Facilities*

The Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements are not classified as recreational facilities. Therefore, the increased development of these sites would not result in impacts associated with the loss of recreational facilities or loss of organized recreational opportunities. No construction impacts on recreational facilities would occur.

Operational Impacts

*Impacts on Existing Neighborhood and Regional Parks*

The Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements are not classified by the city or county as parkland. Therefore, the increased development of these sites would not result in direct impacts associated with the loss of parkland or loss of organized recreational opportunities.

The Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements would not include residential development and thus, would not result in an indirect demand for open space and recreational facilities that would be triggered by an increased residential population to the community. A less-than-significant impact is anticipated and no mitigation measures would be required.

*Impacts from Construction or Expansion on Recreational Facilities*

The Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements are not classified as recreational facilities. Therefore, operation of these sites would not result in the loss of recreational facilities or recreational opportunities. No operational impacts on recreational facilities would occur.
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3.13 Recreation

Cumulative Impacts

Impacts on Existing Neighborhood and Regional Parks

Development of several of the related projects may result in the need for additional recreational uses within the Sylmar community; specifically those projects proposing residential development. It is assumed that planned housing development projects would pose an impact due to an increase in demand on local parks. Furthermore, the Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements would not create any demand for recreational facilities. Therefore, the cumulative recreational impacts are less than significant.

Impacts from Construction or Expansion on Recreational Facilities

Development of the Main Campus, Nursery Property, East Campus, and Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements and related projects would not include expansion into areas classified as recreational facilities. Therefore no impacts on recreational facilities would occur.

3.13.3 Athletic Fields Impacts

Construction Impacts

Impacts on Existing Neighborhood and Regional Parks

Construction of the Athletic Fields would not necessitate the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks. The proposed development would not include residential development, and therefore would not result in an indirect demand for open space and recreational facilities that would be triggered by an increased residential population to the community. Construction activities would not restrict parking, or access to recreational facilities adjacent to the proposed Athletic Fields site, nor would staging of construction equipment or activities occur within any parkland or recreational facility. Construction crews working on the proposed Athletic Fields would not use the El Cariso Community Regional Park or the El Cariso Golf Course in such a manner that any physical deterioration of facilities would occur. As a result, the construction of the proposed Athletic Fields would not impact existing neighborhood and regional parks.

Impacts from Construction on Recreational Facilities

Construction activities associated with development of the proposed Athletic Fields would involve the following: site preparation including grading; construction of a men’s baseball field; women’s softball field; and a men’s/women’s soccer field with concession stands, restrooms, press boxes, batting cages, bull pens, a walking path, and par course. The site would also involve construction of two surface parking lots with solar-panel canopies. All facilities would be for LAMC use only, except for the walking path and par course which would be accessible to the community. Environmental impacts from this construction are also discussed in Sections 3.1 through 3.14.

The LACCD and ACOE properties for the proposed Athletic Fields are used by local community members for passive recreational uses such as walking, mountain-bike riding, and other outdoor activities. These parcels do not contain any established recreational facilities by the city, county, or ACOE. The LACCD parcel is designated by the City of Los Angeles as Open Space/Agriculture, which can be used for parks and recreational facilities, nature reserves, closed sanitary landfill sites, public water supply reservoirs, and water conservation areas. The proposed Athletic Fields would be in compliance with the city’s Open Space/Agriculture designation. The Lopez Dam Basin Master
Plan designates the ACOE property for recreational uses. The parcel is located within Planning Area 1, which calls for intensive recreation with potential for high-impact recreation.

Given the above guidelines and personal communication with ACOE, the ACOE parcel portion of the proposed Athletic Fields would conform to the recreational uses allowed in the Lopez Dam Basin Master Plan.

Upon commencement of construction, local community members would have limited access to the LACCD and ACOE properties. However, the local community would continue to have access to the surrounding area along the pedestrian path between the golf course to the west, along the east of the Pacoima Wash and the Angeles National Forest. Hence, construction of the proposed Athletic Fields would result in less-than-significant impacts related to recreational facilities and recreational opportunities.

Potential noise and air-quality impacts associated with the construction of the Athletic Fields may affect use of the El Cariso Golf Course; further discussion of these potential impacts can be found under Sections 3.2, Air Quality, and 3.11, Noise.

**Operational Impacts**

**Impacts on Existing Neighborhood and Regional Parks**

The proposed Athletic Fields would not include residential development and therefore, would not result in an indirect demand for open space and recreational facilities that would be triggered by an increased residential population to the community. Instead, current use of the El Cariso Community Regional Park by LAMC students for baseball and softball practices and games may be reduced by building the proposed Athletic Fields. As a result, operation of the Athletic Fields would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks.

**Impacts from operations on Recreational Facilities**

Operation of the Athletic fields would limit access to the local community for continued passive recreational use within the combined (approximate) 15 acres LACCD and ACOE properties since the Athletic Fields would be for college use only. The local community would continue to have access to the surrounding area along and to the east and west of the Pacoima Wash, to surrounding community and regional parks, and to the Angeles National Forest. Current use of the El Cariso Community Regional Park by LAMC students for baseball and softball practices and games would also be reduced by building the proposed Athletic Fields, which would allow for greater use of El Cariso Community Regional Park by the local community. Although operation of the Athletic Fields would impact passive recreational space by limiting access to this area, it would not be significant since the community would still have access to the surrounding open spaces discussed above for passive recreation opportunities. Therefore, the proposed Athletic Fields would result in less-than-significant impacts related to recreational facilities. No mitigation measures would be required.

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Cumulative Impacts

Impacts on Existing Neighborhood and Regional Parks

Of the related projects identified within a 4.0-mile radius for the cumulative impact analysis, no recreational improvements were listed. Development of several of the related projects may result in the need for additional recreational uses within the Sylmar community, specifically those projects proposing residential development. It is assumed that planned housing development projects would pose an impact due to an increase in demand on local parks. Since the proposed project is in response to projected student and community needs, development of the Athletic Fields would not contribute considerably to the demand for parkland; and, therefore, would not add a cumulative significant impact or demand on neighborhood and regional parks.

Impacts from Construction or Expansion of Recreational Facilities

Development of the Athletic Fields would result in the provision of additional recreational uses within the city since current use of the El Cariso Community Regional Park by LAMC students for baseball and softball practices and games may be reduced. Given the related projects in the area, there would be no further reduction of passive open space for recreational uses. Therefore, the proposed project would not add a cumulative significant impact on recreational facilities.

3.13.4 Mitigation Measures for Significant Impacts

No mitigation measures are necessary.

3.13.5 Level of Significance after Mitigation

Impacts would be less than significant.