

Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) has been prepared for the Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD or District) to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed Los Angeles Mission College (LAMC) Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan). When individual projects subsequent to adoption of the Master Plan are proposed, the District will examine the individual activities to determine whether their impacts were fully analyzed in the Program EIR. If the activities would have no impacts beyond those analyzed in the Program EIR, the District can assert that the activities are part of the program of projects approved earlier under the Master Plan, and no further CEQA compliance would be required.¹

1.1 CEQA Compliance

The LACCD is the Lead Agency² for approval of the Master Plan and its subsequent projects. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)³ and the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA⁴ (State CEQA Guidelines) require that an EIR be prepared where the Lead Agency has determined that a project may have a significant effect on the environment (State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064). The District completed an Initial Study for the Master Plan on July 6, 2006, and determined that a Program EIR should be prepared (Volume 2, Appendix A, *Notice of Preparation, Initial Study, and Scoping Comment Letters*).

An EIR is an informational document prepared to:

- Inform public agency decision makers and the public generally of the significant environmental impacts of a project;
- Identify possible ways to minimize the significant environmental impacts through “mitigation measures”; and
- Describe reasonable alternatives to the project, which would substantially reduce environmental impacts (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15121).

Preparation of a Program EIR is an alternative to preparing a Project EIR for the Master Plan and will form the basis for later decision making (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15168). A Program EIR is intended to streamline the later environmental review of projects or approvals included within the master plan analyzed in the Program EIR.

¹ *California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3, Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act, Sections 15168, Program Environmental Impact Reports.* Available at <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa>.

² *California Environmental Quality Act Guidelines, Section 15050.* The Lead Agency is responsible for preparing the EIR and taking the first action for project approval.

³ *California Environmental Quality Act, California Public Resources Code, Division 13. Environmental Protection, Sections 21000-21177.* Available at <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa>.

⁴ *CEQA Guidelines, Title 14. California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3. Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act as amended September 7, 2004.* Available at <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa>.

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Accordingly, this Program EIR, to the greatest extent feasible, evaluates the direct and indirect impacts, cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, and irreversible significant impacts on the environment of the subsequent projects that would be developed under the Master Plan. It also provides mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant environmental impacts of the subsequent projects. Upon certification of this Program EIR by the District, subsequent projects described in the Master Plan and Program EIR will be examined in the light of the program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document must be prepared.

- If a later activity would have impacts that were not examined in the program EIR, a new Initial Study would be prepared leading to either an EIR or a Negative Declaration.
- If the District finds that, pursuant to Section 15162 of the CEQA Guidelines, no new impacts could occur or no new mitigation measures would be required, the District can approve the activity as being within the scope of the project covered by the Program EIR, and no new environmental document would be required.
- The District will incorporate feasible mitigation measures and alternatives developed in the Program EIR into subsequent actions in the program.

Public agencies are charged with the duty to avoid or minimize environmental damage where feasible (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15021). In discharging this duty, the District has an obligation to balance a variety of public objectives, including technical, economic, environmental, timing, social, and legal issues.

While the information in the Program EIR does not control the District's ultimate discretion on the Master Plan, the District must respond to each significant effect identified in the Program EIR by making findings (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15091) and, if necessary, by making a Statement of Overriding Consideration (CEQA Guidelines Section 15093).

The information in the Program EIR may constitute substantial evidence in the record to support the District's action on the Master Plan and subsequent projects if its decision(s) is later challenged in court. The District is required to consider the information in the Program EIR with any other relevant information in making final decisions on the Master Plan and subsequent projects (State CEQA Guidelines Section 15121).

1.2 Incorporation by Reference

Section 15150 of the State CEQA Guidelines encourages incorporation by reference of previous environmental documents that are readily available to the public. Incorporation by reference is a necessary device for reducing the size of EIRs and to eliminate the need for inclusion and repetition of copious technical and other background information into an EIR. Of particular relevance to this EIR are the following documents, all of which are

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hereby incorporated by reference into this EIR; they are available for public review at the Mission College Library.

- ***Los Angeles Mission College Draft Facilities Master Plan.***⁵ The Master Plan is the proposed project for the new Program EIR. The Master Plan provides detailed project related information. The Master Plan will continue to be refined by the LACCD and the LAMC throughout the planning process.
- ***Initial Study for the Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan.***⁶ This initial study addresses the environmental impacts of the proposed LAMC Facilities Master Plan. The Initial Study and comments received on the Initial Study were used in the scoping of the new Program EIR.
- ***October 2005 Draft EIR for the Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan and Public Recreation Improvement Program.***⁷ This EIR analyzes the environmental impacts of a previously proposed version of the LAMC Facilities Master Plan. This Master Plan involved expansion of the existing LAMC onto the adjacent County of Los Angeles Cariso Regional Park and the development of regional park facilities on Army Corps of Engineers property in the Pacoima Wash. Much of the analysis in the October 2005 Draft EIR relates directly to development on the LAMC Campus. This document is used extensively in the new Draft EIR, consistent with the provisions of CEQA to reduce the volume of EIRs and to avoid redundant analysis.
- ***Final EIR for May 1983 Mission College Master Plan.***⁸ This EIR addresses the environmental impacts of the existing Mission College Plan. The Master Plan provides for development projects to accommodate a projected enrollment of 10,700 by 1995.
- ***Sylmar Community Plan.***⁹ The Sylmar Community Plan is a part of the City of Los Angeles General Plan and provides planning policies for the incorporated area of the Sylmar Community within the City of Los Angeles. Although, as a state agency, the LACCD is not bound by local land-use plans, courtesy consistency analysis with the Sylmar Community Plan is provided throughout this new Program EIR.

⁵ Los Angeles Mission College, 2006. *Draft Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan*. Prepared by Leo Daly Architects

⁶ Los Angeles Mission College, 6, July 2006. *Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan Initial Study*, prepared by URS Corporation, 915 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90017

⁷ Los Angeles Community College District. October 2005. *Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan and Public Recreation Improvement Program*. Prepared by PCR Services Corporation, 233 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 130, Santa Monica, CA 90401

⁸ Los Angeles Community College District. November 1983. *Final Environmental Impact Report for May 1983 Mission College Master Plan*. Prepared by KDG Architecture and Planning.

⁹ City of Los Angeles. August 1997. *Sylmar Community Plan, A Part of the General Plan*.

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1.3 Environmental Review Process

An Initial Study¹⁰ was prepared to focus the Program EIR on those environmental issues that are expected to have a significant impact on the environment and to eliminate further analysis of those issue areas, which are not expected to result in significant impacts to the environment (see Volume 2, Appendix A). The Initial Study was also used to facilitate early responsible agency and public participation in the scoping and preparation of the Program EIR. A Notice of Preparation¹¹ (NOP) of the Program EIR for the Master Plan and subsequent projects was prepared and circulated along with the Initial Study for a 30-day review period that began on July 3, 2006, and closed on August 1, 2006 (see Appendix A). The documents were mailed directly to the State Clearinghouse and Planning Unit of the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research, the County of Los Angeles Clerk-Recorder, federal, state, regional, and local responsible agencies, and known interested parties on June 30, 2006. The documents were also provided to the Mission College library and other local libraries. The NOP was posted on large signs at both the LAMC campus and on the Harding Street site. The State Clearinghouse transmitted the NOP to responsible agencies on July 3, 2006, and posted the NOP on the State of California Web site via the State Clearinghouse CEQANet database (see Appendix A). Community workshops on the Mission College Facilities Master Plan and scoping for the Program EIR were conducted at Mission College on July 6, 2006, and July 18, 2006. The availability of the NOP and Initial Study and an invitation to participate in the community meeting and Program EIR scoping workshop was published in local newspapers upon release of the NOP and Initial Study (see Appendix A). +

The July 2006 Program EIR scoping meetings facilitated early consultation with interested parties in compliance with Section 15082 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Leo Daly Architects, planning consultant to the District, provided an overview of the Master Plan and URS Corporation, environmental consultant to the District, provided an overview of the CEQA process. URS also provided a summary of the findings of the Initial Study. Input was requested on significant environmental impacts, mitigation measures, project alternatives, and sources of information for the Program EIR. Following the presentation, members of the public provided both oral and written scoping comments. All comments received during the meeting were transcribed by a court reporter. The LAMC received a total of 11 scoping comment letters in response to the NOP, Initial Study, and scoping meetings (see Appendix A). All of the comment letters were provided to URS Corporation, the Program EIR consultant, as they were received, for consideration during the preparation of the Program EIR.

As a result of the analysis undertaken in the Initial Study, and following consideration of the scoping comment letters received during the Program EIR scoping period, it was determined that the proposed project would either not result in significant impacts or

¹⁰ Los Angeles Mission College. July 6, 2006. *Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan Initial Study*, prepared by URS Corporation, 915 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90017.

¹¹ Los Angeles Mission College. July 6, 2006. *Notice of Preparation of a Draft Program Environmental Impact Report for the LAMC Facilities Master Plan*.

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would result in less than significant impacts with mitigation to the following issue areas: agricultural resources, mineral resources, and population and housing (please refer to the Initial Study and scoping comment letters in Appendix A). No further analysis of those environmental resources is undertaken in this Program EIR. However, the Initial Study and Program EIR scoping process concluded that the Master Plan and subsequent projects do have the potential to result in significant impacts to 13 environmental resource areas, which are the subject of the detailed analysis in this Program EIR. These areas are shown in Table 1.3-1.

Table 1.3-1

Environmental Issues Requiring Analysis in Program EIR

Aesthetics	Hydrology and Water Quality
Air Quality	Land Use and Planning
Biological Resources	Noise
Cultural Resources	Public Services and Utilities
Energy Conservation and Sustainability	Recreation
Geology and Soils	Transportation and Circulation
Hazards and Hazardous Materials	

Source: URS Corporation, July 2006

The Draft Program EIR was distributed to various state, regional, and local government agencies and interested organizations and individuals for a 45-day public review and comment period on October 19, 2006. The EIR was provided in either CD-ROM or printed format. The Draft Program EIR was provided to the State Clearinghouse in CD-ROM format for additional distribution to responsible agencies. In addition, a public Notice of Availability of the Draft Program EIR was published in local newspapers and mailed directly to interested parties requesting the document and to surrounding property owners.

Printed copies of the Draft Program EIR are available during the public review period at the following locations:

**Los Angeles Public Library
Sylmar Branch**
14561 Polk Street
Sylmar, CA 91342

**Los Angeles Public Library
Pacoima Branch**
13605 Van Nuys Boulevard
Pacoima, CA 91331

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**Los Angeles Public Library
Sunland-Tujunga Branch**
7771 Foothill Boulevard
Tujunga, CA 91042

**Los Angeles Public Library
Mid-San Fernando Valley Branch**
16244 Nordhoff Street
North Hills, CA 91343

In addition, the Draft EIR is available online at: www.lamission.edu.

Written comments on this Draft Program EIR are invited and should be transmitted during the public review period to the LAMC:

Nick Quintanilla – Construction Manager
c/o Michele Walters – Administrative Assistant
Gateway Science & Engineering
Los Angeles Mission College
13356 Eldridge Avenue
Sylmar, CA 91342

Written comments provided by the public and public agencies will be evaluated, and written responses will be prepared for all comments received during the designated 45-day comment period. Upon completion of the evaluation, a proposed Final Program EIR will be prepared and provided to the Los Angeles Community College District Board of Trustees for certification of compliance with CEQA and for review and consideration as part of the decision-making process for the proposed LAMC Facilities Master Plan.

1.4 Organization and Content

Sections 15122 through 15132 of the State CEQA Guidelines describe the required content of an EIR to be: a description of the proposed project and the environmental setting (existing conditions), an environmental impact analysis, mitigation measures, alternatives, significant irreversible environmental changes, growth-inducing impacts, and cumulative impacts.

VOLUME I of the Program EIR consists of a Draft Program EIR that describes the proposed project, environmental setting, impacts, mitigation, and alternatives considered.

Section ES, Executive Summary, provides a summary of the LAMC Facilities Master Plan and subsequent projects, identifies significant impacts of the Master Plan and subsequent projects, and identifies mitigation measures and project alternatives that were considered to avoid the significant impacts of the Master Plan. In addition, the Executive

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Summary identifies areas of controversy known to the District, considering issues raised by public agencies and the public. The Executive Summary includes a list of the issues to be resolved, including the recommended choice among alternatives, and whether or how to mitigate significant impacts of the Master Plan.

Section 1, Introduction, provides information related to the purpose and scope of the Program EIR, environmental review process, environmental impacts not found to be significant, and the organization and content of the Program EIR (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15128).

Section 2, Project Description, provides the location and boundaries of the proposed Master Plan and subsequent projects; the purpose and statement of objectives of the Master Plan and subsequent projects; and a description of the technical, economic, and environmental characteristics of the Master Plan and subsequent projects. The project description identifies:

- The intended uses of the Program EIR, including the list of public agencies that are expected to use the Program EIR in their respective decision-making processes;
- The related discretionary actions (permits and approvals) required to implement the Master Plan; and
- Any related environmental review and consultation requirements required by federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or policies.

The project description identifies the related projects that were considered in the evaluation of cumulative impacts (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15124).

Section 3, Environmental Setting, Impacts, Mitigation Measures, and Level of Significance after Mitigation, describes existing conditions found regionally and at the proposed project site. It:

- Identifies the “significance thresholds” used to assess the potential for the Master Plan and subsequent projects to result in significant impacts;
- Evaluates the potential impacts to environmental resources that may be generated by the subsequent Master Plan projects, including the cumulative impacts of the proposed projects in conjunction with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area;
- Identifies feasible mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts; and
- Assesses the effectiveness of proposed mitigation measures in reducing identified impacts to below the level of significance.

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This section also evaluates potential uses of nonrenewable resources, potential irreversible changes that may occur during the course of the proposed subsequent projects, and the potential for the proposed project to foster economic growth or population growth, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15125 and 15126).

Section 4, Alternatives to the Proposed Project, describes feasible alternatives to the proposed project that would attain most of the basic objectives of the District and simultaneously avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant impacts of the proposed project. A no-project alternative is also evaluated. CEQA requires an evaluation of the comparative impacts of the proposed project, alternatives to the proposed project, and the no-project alternative (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6).

Section 5, Organizations and Persons Consulted, provides a list of all governmental agencies, community groups, other organizations and persons consulted during the preparation of this Program EIR.

Section 6, Report Preparation Personnel, provides a list of all personnel who provided technical input or review in the preparation of this Program EIR.

Section 7, References, lists all sources, communications, and correspondence used in the preparation of this Program EIR.

Section 8, Acronyms, provides full names and explanations of acronyms used in the preparation of the Program EIR.

VOLUME 2: Technical Appendices

- **Appendix A, Notice of Preparation, Initial Study, and Scoping Comment Letters.** The comment letters received in response to the NOP and oral comments received during the two scoping meetings provide input to the analysis in the Program EIR. All comments were considered during the preparation of the Draft Program EIR.
- **Appendix B, Biological Technical Report**
- **Appendix C, Cultural Resources Assessment**
- **Appendix D, Geotechnical Evaluation**
- **Appendix E, Traffic Impact Analysis**
- **Appendix F, Noise Information**
- **Appendix G, Water Technical Report**

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VOLUME 3 (Future): Letters of Comment, Responses and Clarifications and Revisions

Following public review and comment on the Draft Program EIR (Volumes 1 and 2), the District will prepare Volume 3 of the Program EIR, which will consist of the following:

Executive Summary will update the Executive Summary of the Draft Program EIR to reflect the revisions made in response to public comments. The Impact Summary Table will also be updated.

Section 9, Clarifications and Revisions to the Draft Program EIR, providing any necessary clarifications and revisions that the District believes are appropriate, in light of the public comments.

Section 10, Comment Letters and Written Responses, providing a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft Program EIR (Volume 1 and 2), a written record of all comments received on the Draft Program EIR either verbatim or in summary, and written responses to all substantive environmental points raised during the public review and consultation process (CEQA Guidelines Section 15132).

The Final Program EIR will consist of **Volumes 1-3**.