

3.17 Significant Irreversible Environmental Impacts

This section of the EIR summarizes significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by the 2009 Master Plan. Typical examples of irreversible environmental changes are:

- Use of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of a project;
- Physical changes, such as a highway improvement, that provides access to a previously inaccessible area that commits future generations to similar uses; and
- Irreversible damage that can result from environmental accidents or other impacts.

The CEQA Guidelines also suggest that irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to assure that such current consumption is justified¹.

Irreversible aesthetic impacts from previously approved construction projects on the East Campus were analyzed in the 2007 Master Plan EIR and EIR Addendum. These previous planning efforts concluded that:

- Development of the 2007 Master Plan would irreversibly obstruct public views of the San Gabriel Mountains to the east.

The 2009 Master Plan introduces significant unavoidable aesthetic impacts relative to the loss of open space and views of the hillsides in the development landscape screening of the athletic fields. Lighting of the athletic fields would remain a significant impact. Policy conflicts also exist with the Sylmar Community Plan.

The 2009 Master Plan would also involve significant operational and construction related air quality impacts, including the impacts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions on global climate change.

Significant traffic related impacts would occur in the following locations:

- The Maclay Avenue/I-210 WB Ramp intersection would experience LOS F during the PM Peak Hour (4:00-6:00 p.m.);
- Hubbard Street between Gladstone and Fenton would experience cumulatively significant traffic congestion; and
- Maclay Avenue between Gladstone and Fenton would experience cumulatively significant traffic congestion.

With respect to the new significant aesthetics impacts from the 2009 Master Plan, the athletic fields uses could be terminated and the land could be reverted to uses that do not block views of open space and the hills. Thus, these are not irreversible impacts.

With respect to transportation impacts, a public transit system could be developed or a land-use change could be made that would reduce traffic generation in the project area. Efforts to address

¹ CEQA Guidelines, Section 15126.2 (c)

3.0 Setting, Environmental Impact Analysis, Mitigation Measures

3.17 Significant Irreversible Environmental Impacts

global climate change and escalating gasoline prices may cause a shift toward public transit. Traffic impacts would also be reduced if the college ceases operation. Thus, significant traffic-related impacts are likely to continue but are not considered permanent, irreversible environmental changes.

Operation-related air-quality impacts, including the substantial contribution of GHG emissions resulting in impacts to global climate change, are due in part to mobile source emissions which could decrease as new vehicle technologies are developed, or if the college ceases operation. Thus, these are not irreversible impacts.

Construction-related air-quality impacts are temporary and would not result in irreversible environmental change. Therefore, there are no permanent, irreversible environmental changes related to air quality.

In conclusion, there would be no significant irreversible environmental impacts from the 2009 Master Plan and its subsequent college facilities projects.