

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1-1 WEST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

West Los Angeles College (College) is a 2-year community college accredited by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Officially chartered in 1969, the College is one of nine community colleges that form the Los Angeles Community College District (District). The College serves the communities of Beverly Hills, Brentwood, Century City, Crenshaw, Culver City, La Tijera/Windsor Hills, Marina del Rey, Mar Vista, Pacific Palisades, Palms, Playa del Rey, Venice, Westchester, West Los Angeles, and Westwood.

The College has several instructional divisions, which provide a wide range of high-quality transfer and occupational classes. These divisions are Aviation and Travel, Behavioral and Social Sciences, Business, Humanities and Fine Arts, Language Arts, Learning Resource Center, Math-Sciences, and Physical Education and Health. The College offers associates in arts and Associate in science degrees as well as occupational career certificates.

Total enrollment at the College has varied substantially over the years. Upon its establishment in 1969, the total census credit enrollment was 3,282 students.¹ In 1980, total enrollment peaked at 11,640 students. There were an estimated 9,718 students enrolled at the College in the fall 2002 semester. During the 2002–2003 academic year, there were 6,930 full-time-equivalent (FTE)² students enrolled at the College.³

In the fall 2003 semester, 10,312 students (or 3,022 FTE students) were enrolled, and 550 persons (or 357 FTE employees) were employed at the College.⁴ ~~Early estimates reveal that~~ In spring 2004, a total of 9,139 students (or 2,900 FTE students) were enrolled and 475 persons (or 285 FTE employees) were employed at the College.⁵

The College is organized on a semester system. The academic year includes two 19-week semesters; as many as three 6-week summer sessions are offered, subject to approval by the Board of Trustees. In addition, intensive short-term classes are offered in a variety of courses

¹ Los Angeles Community College District. Informational Digest. Available at <http://research.laccd.edu/research/>. Last Accessed on June 4, 2004.

² To determine the number of full-time-equivalent (FTE) students, the District calculates the total number of instructional hours for all of the enrollments and divides by 525 hours, which is roughly the number of instructional hours of one student taking five 3-unit classes for two primary terms. Instructional hours are based on enrollments on a census date and hours are counted differently for full-term and short-term classes. Some courses require reporting of actual hours of attendance only.

³ Los Angeles Community College District. Enrollment and Student Characteristics. Available at <http://research.laccd.edu/research/enrlmnt/ftes.htm>. Last Accessed on June 4, 2004.

⁴ West Los Angeles College. Planning and Research Department. E-mail correspondence on July 13, 2004.

⁵ *Ibid.*

each semester and there are five sessions of 9-week classes each year. Day, evening, and Saturday classes are available for full-time and part-time students. The most recent spring semester began on February 16, 2004, and concluded on June 14, 2004. The fall 2004 semester ~~will begin~~began on August 30, 2004, and ~~will conclude~~concluded on December 19, 2004.⁶

1-2 DEVELOPMENT OF THE FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

In its current form, the College campus reflects previous master planning efforts dating back to its opening in 1969. The first permanent facilities on the campus were developed between 1973 and 1979. In 1989 the College undertook preparation of a revised Master Plan and environmental impact report (EIR) with a build-out date of 1998. The majority of the 1989 Plan has been implemented, but some facilities were not due to funding limits and changes in programming needs. These were included in the current planning effort described below and addressed in this EIR.

In fall 2000, the College launched the West Los Angeles College Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan) planning process by holding committee meetings with all the organizational units and constituencies of the College. The Master Plan was envisioned to serve as a framework for future resource allocation, priority setting, and continuous innovation. In May 2001, 80 students, faculty, and staff participated in the Vision Festival 2001, which provided a forum for interactive discussion about the College's educational values and principles and a renewal of a vision for the future. In June 2001, a campus design charette was organized to translate the Vision Festival's results into design principles for physical development of the campus. Around the same time, a community needs assessment was developed to describe the existing student demographics, economic trends, educational trends, and student success measures. During the fall of 2001 and extending into the spring of 2002, the College's major divisions (Academic Affairs, Administrative Services, Student Services, Workforce and Economic Development, and the offices reporting to the President) engaged in the development of long-range unit plans, including goals for their educational programs and service plans. In May 2002, students, faculty, and staff participated in Master Plan discussion workshops in which the alternatives outlined in the preliminary drafts of the Master Plan were discussed and strategic directions identified. Initial technical studies addressing the traffic and utilities impacts of the Master Plan were conducted in the summer of 2002. In fall 2002, a Master Plan draft was sent to all constituencies for final review and input. In May 2003, the College finalized main components of the Master Plan.

Subsequent to definition of the Master Plan in 2003, further refinements to the Master Plan were made in consultation with members of the College and adjoining community. The refined Master Plan (2004) that was developed provided the basic project description for this ~~draft~~-EIR. The 2004 Master Plan identifies the amount and location of planned new construction, renovation, and demolition projects, which are expected to occur over the next 5 years or through the year 2010.

⁶ West Los Angeles College website. Available at <http://www.wlac.edu/schedules/summer04/FCalendar.pdf>. Last accessed on July 21, 2004.

1-3 PROPOSITIONS A AND AA BOND MEASURES

Proposition A is a \$1.245 billion facilities bond that is being used to repair, rehabilitate, and modernize facilities at all nine of the District’s campuses. Los Angeles voters approved Proposition A on April 10, 2001, by a 67-percent margin, surpassing the 55 percent needed for passage. The District has established a goal of spending \$525 million in the first 36 months on programming, design, and construction for the District’s nine campuses.

Proposition AA is a \$980 million bond measure to fund critical construction and repairs at all nine colleges of the District. Los Angeles voters approved Proposition AA on May 20, 2003, with a 64-percent majority vote.

Proposition A and AA require that bond revenues be expended only for construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of college facilities and that no bond revenues be expended for any teacher or administrative salaries or other college operating expenses. To ensure that all these requirements are met, the District established an independent District Citizens’ Oversight Committee, as well as Citizens’ Oversight Committees for each of the District’s nine colleges. The committees are composed of business, labor, education, student, senior, and community leaders.

The College was allocated \$111 million of the \$1.245 billion Proposition A bond measure and \$67 million of the \$980 million Proposition AA bond measure. The \$111 million in Proposition A funding and \$67 million in Proposition AA funding will be used to construct many of the facilities proposed under the Master Plan. The completion of several projects envisioned under the Master Plan is contingent upon allocation of additional funding.

1-4 THE CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the preparation of an EIR when there is substantial evidence that a project may have a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of an EIR is to provide decision makers, public agencies, and the general public with an objective and informational document that fully discloses the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. The EIR process is specially designed to facilitate the objective evaluation of potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project; and to identify potentially feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that reduce or avoid the project’s significant effects. In addition, CEQA specifically requires that an EIR identify those adverse impacts determined to be significant after mitigation.

The EIR for the Master Plan is a combined Project/Program EIR. A Project EIR is the most common type of EIR and examines the environmental effects of a specific development project. A Program EIR is described in Section 15168 of the *State CEQA Guidelines* as an EIR “which may be prepared on a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related either geographically, as logical parts in the chain of contemplated actions, [or] in connection with issuance of rules, regulations, plans or other general criteria to govern the

conduct of a continuing program...” According to the *State CEQA Guidelines*, a Program EIR can provide the following advantages:

- provide an occasion for a more exhaustive consideration of effects and alternatives than would be practical in an EIR on an individual action;
- ensure consideration of cumulative impacts that may be slighted on a case-by-case basis;
- avoid duplicative reconsideration of basic policy considerations;
- allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts; and
- allow reduction in paperwork.

Under CEQA, specific projects proposed under the program or plan (e.g., Master Plan) may rely on the Program EIR as the base environmental document for environmental review. Subsequent activities (or projects) in the program or plan must be examined in light of the Program EIR to determine whether an additional environmental document (e.g., negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or EIR) must be prepared. If the lead agency finds that the subsequent activity or project would not result in new effects or require new mitigation measures, the lead agency 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. If an EIR is required for a subsequent activity, the subsequent EIR can focus solely on new effects that were not considered before. According to CEQA, a Program EIR will be most helpful in dealing with subsequent activities if it deals with the effects of the program as specifically and comprehensively as possible. With a good and detailed analysis of the program, many subsequent activities could be found to be within the scope of the project described in the Program EIR, with the result that no further environmental documents would be required.

An initial study was prepared for the Master Plan, and it was determined that the project required the preparation of an EIR. A notice of preparation (NOP) was therefore issued for the project on January 7, 2003, to solicit comments on the proposed content of the EIR. A public scoping meeting was held on January 21, 2003. At this meeting, the Master Plan was discussed in an open house format and comments were taken on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Master Plan. Based upon comments received on the NOP and refinements to the Master Plan, the District, as the lead agency, prepared and circulated another NOP on February 18, 2003. Another public scoping meeting was held on March 5, 2003. Both NOPs were circulated for a period of 30 days. While many issues were raised during the NOP comment period, the issues that were mentioned most often were traffic, parking, special event-related noise, athletic field lighting, and second access road location. A draft EIR was prepared and circulated for public review from July 23, 2003, to September 22, 2003. In response to the comments received, the College conducted further analysis and made additional revisions to the Master Plan.

In May 2004, the District decided to issue a new NOP and prepare a new draft EIR to allow additional comment on the proposed EIR. The proposed Master Plan now includes a new alignment for a second access route to the campus and other modifications to the Master Plan. The NOP was distributed on May 20, 2004, to the State Office of Planning and Research and responsible and trustee agencies as well as private organizations and individuals that may have an interest in the proposed project. The purpose of the NOP was to provide notification that the College planned to prepare an EIR for the proposed project and to solicit guidance on the scope and content of the EIR. Approximately 110 copies of the NOP were distributed to various agencies, organizations, and individuals. Responses to the NOP as well as a copy of the NOP are included in Appendix A of this ~~draft~~ EIR. In addition, a public scoping meeting was held on June 2, 2004, to provide information on the project and to receive comments on issues to be addressed in the EIR. Written comments submitted at the scoping meeting are also provided in Appendix A.

This ~~draft~~ EIR focuses on the environmental impacts identified as potentially significant during preparation of the initial study and public circulation of the NOP. It also addresses other adverse impacts of the proposed project.

As the lead agency under CEQA, the District directed the preparation of this EIR through the use of professional environmental services contractors. This EIR, however, reflects the independent judgment of the District and is intended to comply with CEQA and the *State CEQA Guidelines* (see Public Resources Code, §21100; *State CEQA Guidelines*, §§15120-15132).

~~This A draft EIR is now being~~ was circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days from September 16, 2004, to November 1, 2004. During this period, comments from the general public, organizations, and agencies on environmental issues raised in the draft EIR and the draft EIR's accuracy and completeness ~~may be~~ were submitted to the District at the following address:

Shari Borchetta, Vice President, Administrative Services
West Los Angeles College
9000 Overland Avenue
Culver City, CA 90230
Phone: (310) 287- 4241
deircomments@wlaac.edu

~~Formal comments on the draft EIR should be submitted in writing and delivered to the address above by 5 p.m. on the last day of the public review period identified in the notice of availability attached to this draft EIR. Upon completion of the public review period, a this final EIR will be~~ was prepared. ~~The~~ This final EIR ~~will~~ includes the comments on the draft EIR received during the formal public review period as well as responses to those comments (see Chapter 9 of this final EIR). ~~This draft EIR and the final EIR will comprise the EIR for the proposed project.~~

Prior to approval of the proposed project, CEQA also requires the District to adopt "findings" with respect to each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR (Public Resources Code, §21081; *State CEQA Guidelines*, §15091). For each such significant effect, CEQA requires the approving agency to make one or more of the following findings:

- The project has been altered to avoid or substantially lessen significant impacts identified in the EIR.
- The responsibility to carry out the above is under the jurisdiction of another agency.
- Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or project alternatives identified in the final EIR.

In the event that the District, as the lead agency, concludes that the proposed project will result in significant effects that are identified in the EIR but are not substantially lessened or avoided by feasible mitigation measures and alternatives, the District must adopt a “statement of overriding considerations” prior to approval of the proposed project (Public Resources Code, §21081, subd. (b); *State CEQA Guidelines*, §15093). Such statements are intended under CEQA to provide a written means by which the lead agency balances in writing the benefits of the proposed project and the significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Where the lead agency concludes that the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable environmental impacts, the lead agency may find such impacts “acceptable” and approve the project.

In addition, pursuant to Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code, public agencies, when approving a project, must also adopt a monitoring or reporting program for the changes that were incorporated into the project or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment. The reporting or monitoring program is adopted at the time of project approval and must be designed to ensure compliance during project implementation. If the District, as the lead agency, approves the proposed project, the College will implement the proposed project and mitigation monitoring program on behalf of the District.

1-5 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR AND OTHER PUBLIC AGENCY ACTIONS

According to Section 15121 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*, an EIR is a public document used by a public agency to analyze the potentially significant environmental effects of a proposed project, to identify alternatives, and to disclose possible ways to reduce or avoid possible environmental damage. As an informational document, an EIR does not recommend for or against approving a project. The main purpose of an EIR is to inform governmental decision makers and the public about potential environmental impacts of the project.

Accordingly, this EIR will be used by the District, as the lead agency under CEQA, in making decisions with regard to approval of the Master Plan and implementation of projects identified in the Master Plan.

The information in this EIR may also be used by the responsible agencies identified below in deciding whether to grant permits or approvals necessary to construct or operate the proposed projects discussed in the Master Plan.

- State of California
—Department of Fish and Game

- Department of General Services
 Division of the State Architect
- Department of Toxic Substances Control
- State Fire Marshal

- Regional Water Quality Control Board (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit)
- South Coast Air Quality Management District (stationary source permits)
- County of Los Angeles
- City of Culver City
- City of Los Angeles

1-6 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

The Executive Summary chapter of this ~~draft~~-EIR provides an overview of the detailed information contained in subsequent chapters. It consists of an introduction, a description of the proposed project and alternatives considered; a discussion of areas of controversy and issues to be resolved; and a table that summarizes the potential environmental impacts in each category and the significance determination, mitigation measures, and the level of significance after mitigation for those impacts.

Chapter 1 of this ~~draft~~-EIR describes the purpose of the proposed project and project background. It includes a brief overview of the CEQA environmental review process, a description of the intended uses of the EIR and public agency actions, and this section describing the organization of the ~~draft~~-EIR.

Chapter 2 of this ~~draft~~-EIR provides a detailed description of the proposed project as well as the project objectives, location, characteristics, and construction scenario. Related projects in the project area are also identified in Chapter 2.

Chapter 3 of this ~~draft~~-EIR describes the potential environmental effects of implementing the proposed project. The discussion in Chapter 3 is organized by impact category. For each impact category, the analysis and discussion is organized into four subsections as described below:

- **Environmental Setting** – This subsection describes the environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project site at the time of publication of the NOP. It also describes applicable governing bodies and regulations. The environmental setting establishes the baseline conditions by which the District will determine whether specific project-related impacts are significant.
- **Environmental Impacts** – For each environmental impact category, criteria are identified for determining whether an impact is considered significant. This subsection provides detailed information on the environmental effects of the proposed project and whether or not the impacts of the proposed project exceed the established significance criteria.

- **Mitigation Measures** – This subsection identifies potentially feasible mitigation measures that would avoid or substantially reduce significant adverse project-related impacts. It also identifies mitigation measures that the District has agreed to implement, and indicates whether or not project-related impacts would be reduced to below a level of significance with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the EIR.
- **Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts** – This subsection identifies any residual significant and unavoidable adverse effects of the proposed project that would result even after mitigation measures have been applied.

Chapter 4 of this ~~draft~~-EIR describes the No-Project Alternative and other alternatives that were considered during the planning process. It also identifies the environmentally superior alternative.

Chapter 5 of this ~~draft~~-EIR provides an overview of the potential environmental effects of the proposed project, including:

- **Unavoidable Significant Adverse Impacts** – This subsection summarizes for quick reference and identification the unavoidable significant adverse impacts described in detail in Chapter 3.
- **Impacts Found Not to Be Significant** – This subsection summarizes for quick reference and identification the potentially adverse impacts that were found not to be significant.
- **Irreversible Environmental Changes** – This subsection discusses any irreversible changes to the environment that could occur as a result of construction or operation of the proposed project.
- **Cumulative Impacts** – This subsection addresses the potential cumulative impacts that may result from the proposed project in combination with the related impacts resulting from other reasonably foreseeable past, present, and future projects.
- **Growth-Inducing Impacts** – This subsection describes the potential for the proposed project to foster economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.

Chapter 6 provides a bibliography of reference materials used in the preparation of this ~~draft~~-EIR.

Chapter 7 includes a list of persons and organizations consulted during preparation of this ~~draft~~-EIR.

Chapter 8 identifies the preparers of this ~~draft~~-EIR.

Chapter 9 includes public comments on the draft EIR and responses to those comments.

Several appendices follow Chapter ~~89~~.