

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Los Angeles Community College District and West Los Angeles College in the County of Los Angeles are proposing to adopt a College Facilities Master Plan (FMP) to guide campus development through 2022. At that time it is projected that 18,904 students will be enrolled at the College. The Facilities Master Plan is available for review at the College library or available for download from the College's website at www.wlac.edu/MP2003. Student enrollment on the campus as of Spring 2002 was 9,287 (6,436 FTE). Currently, the campus has 516 employees, (334 FTE), including faculty, staff, and administrators. In 2022, the number of annual full-time-equivalent (FTE) students is projected to be 15,342.¹ It is projected that by 2022, there will be 1,248 headcount employees or the full time equivalent of 813. The primary purpose of the FMP is to guide the physical development of the WLAC campus in achieving its academic goals.

Bond Measures

In April 2001, Los Angeles voters approved Proposition A, which provides for a \$1.245 billion facilities bond to be used to construct new buildings and modernize existing facilities at all nine of the Los Angeles Community College District's campuses. West Los Angeles College has been allocated \$111 million of the bond funds. The Facilities Master Plan provides implementation strategies for "Proposition A" development projects as well as for projects outside of Proposition A. The Plan identifies the location of these projects, their approximate size, and the types of uses and activities they will contain.

In May 2002, Los Angeles voters approved Proposition AA, which provides for additional funds to construct new buildings and modernize existing facilities on all nine of the Los Angeles Community College District's campuses. The \$980 million facilities bond will be used to construct new buildings and modernize existing facilities. West Los Angeles College has not been allocated any specific amount of the \$980 million bond measure. The College will utilize whatever funds are allocated to partially fund Phase II of the Facilities Management Plan.

Project Objectives

The purpose of the West Los Angeles College Facilities Master Plan is to provide for continued and expanded educational opportunities for students. Nine (9) goals and objectives have been identified in the Master Plan as a result of input from the Campus Planning Committee, the Cabinet, and the campus community. The goals are identified below and discussed further in Section III, Project Description. The identified goals are:

- Goal 1:** Create a "State-of-the-Art" physical campus environment that conveys the College's excellence and stability.
- Goal 2:** Organize and develop land use activities within the campus to strengthen academic, cultural and social interaction.
- Goal 3:** Take advantage of the views from the higher locations of the campus.
- Goal 4:** Create a strong, walkable pedestrian-friendly Campus Core.
- Goal 5:** Preserve, enhance and restore the natural environment.

¹ A method of student workload measurement used for comparison analysis. The LACCD considers 525 hours to be the number of instructional hours of one student taking five 3-unit courses for two primary terms. Therefore, a student who receives 262.5 instructional hours would have a full-time equivalence of 0.5. In other words, the student is equivalent to half a full-time student.

- Goal 6:** Strengthen and clarify circulation systems to create a safe, convenient and accessible environment.
- Goal 7:** Maintain flexibility in use of spaces and buildings; design for future growth and expansion.
- Goal 8:** Create a strong sense of place that supports the academic and social life of the College.
- Goal 9:** Strengthen physical connections and campus activities that serve the surrounding community.

Project Location and Setting

The College is located on an approximately 72-acre parcel within unincorporated Los Angeles County on the westside. The site sits on a series of graded building pads with intervening slopes on the western side of the Baldwin Hills. The campus is bordered by the City of Culver City to the west, northwest and south. The Inglewood (Baldwin Hills) Oil Field borders the campus on the northeastern side. Residential areas are located adjacent to the campus immediately to the west and south.

Access to the campus is provided through Culver City at one primary entrance located at Overland Avenue, two blocks south of Jefferson Boulevard. The College is bounded by Freshman Drive to the west, Sophomore Drive to the north and east and Stocker Street to the south. These three Los Angeles County roadways function as a campus loop street. The College is approximately 1.25 miles east of the San Diego Freeway (I-405) and 1.6 miles south of the Santa Monica Freeway (I-10).

The campus is developed with classrooms, administrative offices, libraries, minimal food facilities, maintenance facilities, track and athletic fields and facilities, and surface parking. The College has 419,315 square feet (sf)² of building area. Of this 325,078 sf are within permanent structures, while 94,237 sf are housed in temporary structures. The permanent buildings are generally in good condition. However, the temporary buildings provide few campus amenities and create an overall uninviting, institutional and temporary image for the campus.

Project Description

Master Plan development is proposed as a two-phased undertaking through the year 2022. Phase I accommodates most of the College's projected needs through 2015. Phase II accommodates a portion of the College's projected needs through 2022. A total of approximately 439,350 square feet (sf)³ of new permanent buildings is anticipated to occur as a result of implementation of buildout of the Master Plan. However, implementation of the Plan will remove approximately 66,628 sf of temporary buildings. This results in a net increase of 372,723 sf of on campus buildings. The Plan also proposes to construct two parking structures providing approximately 2,700 parking spaces. The parking structures would total approximately 1,060,000 sf. Below is a brief summary of the proposed improvements, see Section III - Project Description for a more complete discussion.

Phase I

Phase I of the Master Plan consists of approximately 210,729 square feet of new buildings, including the following: Science and Math (65,512 sf), general classroom (50,843 sf), student services (92,989 sf), convenience store (1,320 sf) and a small entry kiosk at the main entrance to campus (see Figure 3). Phase I also includes a new parking structure that will provide 1,000 parking spaces within a 374,000 sf structure. Physical education improvements in

² All square foot numbers are gross square feet, unless otherwise indicated.

³ The size of new development structures are defined in the Facilities Master Plan; however given the long-term nature of the plan, it is possible that some structures will vary in size from what is ultimately built. Therefore, in order to conservatively prepare a "worst case" analysis, the EIR will assume that any individual new structure could grow by as much as ten percent. Therefore, the values presented throughout the EIR are ten percent larger than that presented in the FMP.

Phase I include artificial turf on the football field, and an outdoor all-weather running track. Additional campus improvements will include landscaping; hardscaping; waterscaping; development of a walking trail; signage; general campus lighting; on-campus road improvements; bus plaza; seating areas; covered areas; mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems; and a traffic signal at the intersection of Albert Vera Street at Freshman Drive and a stop sign at the intersection of Stocker Street at Freshman Drive.

Phase II

Phase II of the Master Plan would consist of approximately 228,621 square feet of development (see Figure 4). Phase II Master Plan components to be developed would include the following: Communications, Entertainment and Media Arts Building (88,000 sf); Physical Education Annex (13,200 sf); Student Services Building/Information Technology Building (44,000 sf); Heldman Learning Resource Center Renovation (addition of 10,271 sf); bleacher restroom (4,950 sf); community center building (13,200 sf) and ice rink building (55,000 sf). Additional structures to be constructed in this phase include new bleachers (2,000 seats) for the football field and a parking structure (686,000 sf and 1,700 spaces). Additional improvements will include: new tennis courts; baseball, softball, soccer and throwing field renovations; and lighting for some athletic facilities.

Second Access Road

As the College grows, a second access will be needed to improve access to campus and for safety of WLAC students, faculty and staff. Without construction of a second access route, the one existing entryway at Overland Avenue and Freshman Drive would have to accommodate all campus related trips. A second access to the campus is expected to be located on an off-site location generally north of the campus. No particular alignment has yet been selected or approved. However, the Master Plan identifies three conceptual alternative routes for providing a second access to the campus. The first alternative is a northerly connection to the intersection of Jefferson Boulevard and Duquesne Avenue through the Culver City Park. The second alternative is north through the Baldwin Hills oil fields to Jefferson Boulevard via Hetzler Road. The third alternative travels north from Sophomore Drive eastward to La Cienega Boulevard.

Alternatives to the Project

CEQA requires review of a reasonable range of alternatives to explore ways in which the significant impacts of the project could be reduced. Alternatives to the project are evaluated in Section VI of this Draft EIR. Under the CEQA Guidelines' standards for adequacy, the EIR must contain "a sufficient degree of analysis to provide decision-makers with information which enables them to make a decision which intelligently takes account of environmental consequences." The analysis of environmental effects of project alternatives need not be as thorough or detailed as the analysis of the project itself. Rather, the CEQA Guidelines state that the EIR shall include "sufficient information about each alternative to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the proposed project."

The alternatives must be considered even if they would to some degree impair the attainment of project objectives; however, project objectives are important factors in selecting a preferred alternative. The CEQA Guidelines provide additional factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives. These factors include, "site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, general plan consistency, other plans or regulatory limitations, jurisdictional boundaries and whether the proponent can reasonably acquire, control or otherwise have access to the alternative site."

Alternatives Considered but Rejected

In selecting appropriate alternatives for evaluation, the College considered, but ultimately rejected the further analysis of the following alternatives: Alternative Sites (rejected primarily due to the ultimate FMP objective, which

is to plan for on-campus growth); Substantially Increased Distance Learning (rejected due to its limited ability to reduce impacts); College Uses Plus Housing (rejected due to the fact that this option because it is not part of the current mission statement, goals or needs of the College, as well its limited ability to reduce impacts); Total Buildout (rejected because it would be speculative to attempt to estimate development and funding for that development past that already described as part of the project, especially given the already long - 20-year - horizon for the FMP); Alternate Site Plan (rejected due to the limited possibilities given the partially-built campus, the logic with which planned buildings have been sited, and its limited ability to reduce impacts). (See Section VI. Alternatives, for further discussion.)

Alternatives for the Second Access Road

Three potential routes for the secondary access road have been considered, although neither the LACCD nor WLAC has committed to the acquisition of any property for any particular roadway alignment. Because the roadway is listed as a Phase II project, the alternative alignments are discussed, where impacts would occur, within each individual environmental analysis section (Section V).

Alternatives Chosen for Evaluation

The following alternatives were selected for evaluation and comparison to the project:

1. No Project/Existing Conditions Alternative. The first alternative assumes that no changes to the campus occur. The existing structures, including classroom, sports facilities, and parking lots would remain in their current condition. The student enrollment would remain at 9,287 (6,436 FTE), the employee count would remain at 516 (334 FTE), and a total of 419,315 sf of building space would remain. This building space would continue to consist of 325,078 sf within permanent structures and 94,237 sf in temporary structures. This alternative is another traditional version of the No Project Alternative. It satisfies the purpose of allowing decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6 (e) 1).

2. No Project/Previous Facilities Master Plan Alternative. This alternative demonstrates what would occur if development follows the Previous WLAC Facilities Master Plan (PFMP), adopted in 1989. This alternative satisfies CEQA ((Guideline Section 15126.6 (e) 2)) in providing an alternative that focuses on what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future, based on current plans, if the project were not approved. Under the PFMP, five phases or stages of development were described, which would have resulted in a total of 522,327 sf of development on the campus. Existing development on Campus at the time (1989) was considered Stage I (286,715 sf of development existed at the time - calculated by a process of deduction). Stage II and III have since been constructed, and part of Stage IV, the Child Development Center is now under construction, and considered built for the purposes of this EIR (see Project Description, Section III). Stage IV was also to include of a second floor addition to the Science Building and an outdoor amphitheater, neither of which has been built. Stage V was to consist of relocation of the Campus Police offices and the construction of an indoor swimming pool. The previous PFMP development for Stages II through IV, would have allowed 235,612 sf (excluding the parking structure square footage and relocation square footage). The net new development proposed at the time was 235,612 sf; however, given current existing conditions (see Table VI-2), the net new development would be 103,012 sf.

This alternative includes less development than the proposed project, particularly considering that the PFMP had an earlier build-out date of 1998, and there was less already built on the site (note that despite the passing of the

build-out date, not all the buildings were constructed, as shown in Table VI-2). The PFMP Alternative would result in a total of 15,000 students (9,524 FTE).⁴

3. Phase I Only Alternative. The third alternative consists of a Phase I of the currently proposed FMP, excluding Phase II and the second access road. A total of 615,843 gross sf of campus structures would be developed by the end of Phase II, which is 196,528 sf over the existing conditions total of 419,315. In addition, a parking structure on Lot 8 (to accommodate 1,000 automobile spaces) and sports fields would be constructed (not included in the total square footage for structures). The Phase I Only Alternative would result in a total of 15,124 students (12,843 FTE) and 953 employees (622 FTE).

Conclusion/Selection of the Environmentally Superior Alternative

The potential environmental impacts of each of the three alternatives were compared to the project's potential impacts. As required by CEQA, an environmentally superior alternative must be identified. In this case, all the alternatives would have lessened impacts over the project. The alternatives with the least environmental impacts would be the No Project/Existing Conditions Alternative, followed by the No Project/PFMP Alternative, followed by the Phase I Only Alternative.

The project was selected over the alternatives due to the need to serve additional demand for post-secondary education in the LACCD area, and at WLAC in particular. The goals of the project for the 2022 Master Plan (stated in the Project Description, and in the introductory portion of this Alternatives Section), would not be met with the No Project/Existing Conditions Alternative, and would be met to an unsatisfactory degree with the No Project/PFMP Alternative, and the Phase I Only Alternative.

Given its significant unavoidable impacts, the proposed project will require a Statement of Overriding Considerations under CEQA. To adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations, the LACCD must determine that there are overriding benefits to the project that outweigh the significant impacts. The primary benefit and objective of the project is the provision of educational opportunities, which is an objective of high importance on the local, state and federal government level. None of the alternatives go as far as the project in meeting this primary benefit.

Areas of Known Controversy

The project proposal was reviewed by the Los Angeles Community College District (serving as Lead Agency), an Initial Study was prepared, and it was determined that the Project required the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (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 FMP was discussed in an open house format and comments were taken on the environmental impacts of the proposed Project. However, based upon comments received on the NOP and refinements to the FMP, the Lead Agency prepared and circulated a new NOP on February 18, 2003. Another Public Scoping Meeting was held on March 5, 2003. Both NOPs were circulated for a period of at least 30 days. All comments received on the NOPs relating to the EIR were reviewed and incorporated to the extent relevant and feasible in this EIR. Both NOPs and all comment letters received are provided in Appendix 1.

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.

⁴ Student projections for PFMP are from the Final EIR for that Plan, Bolling Gill Allen McDonald Architects for the LACCD, April, 1989, Table 10, Page 42. No employee projections are given.

Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Table II-1 provides a summary of the environmental impacts that would result from implementation of the proposed project, potential mitigation measures and the significance level of the impact after implementation of proposed mitigation measures.

See Section V, Environmental Impact Assessment, for a detailed discussion of project impacts.