

L. RECREATION AND PARKS

This section assesses the extent to which the proposed project would increase the use of existing recreational facilities in the vicinity of the project site, and thereby result in the potential for physical impacts on those facilities. See Section V.H, Land Use, for a discussion of impacts on existing and planned recreational facilities in terms of direct physical impacts or potential incompatibilities (e.g., direct impacts associated with construction of an access road through Culver City Park).

Existing Conditions

Recreational Facilities on the West Los Angeles College Campus

The West Los Angeles College (WLAC) campus currently provides a number of active and passive recreational facilities, including a gymnasium, a baseball field, football field, track, tennis courts, basketball courts, and other athletic fields. These recreational facilities are open to the community when not in use for physical education and recreational activities of the College. The gymnasium and athletic fields are used for local sporting events such as high school baseball and football games, local soccer league games.

Culver City Recreational Facilities

Public parks and recreation facilities in the area surrounding the proposed Project are available within Culver City to the west, south, and north of the WLAC campus, and within the Baldwin Hills to the east and north of the campus. The Culver City Department of Parks and Recreation operates and maintains about 90 acres of local parkland within the City among 19 park sites. These sites are classified as city parks, community parks, neighborhood parks, parkettes, and special facilities, based on the areas they serve and their size. Culver City Park, a 41.55-acre park facility located on the east side of Jefferson Boulevard at Duquesne Avenue, is the only city park and the largest park within Culver City. This park exceeds the minimum recommended size of a City Park (25 acres). Veteran's Memorial Park (10.95 acres) is the only community park although Fox Hills Park (10.00 acres) and Syd Kronenthal Park (6.68), which are classified as neighborhood parks, also serve a limited community park function. Other neighborhood parks disbursed throughout the City range in size from 1.46 to 3.00 acres and parkettes are under an acre. Facilities provided at these City parks generally include: passive grass areas, picnic and barbeque facilities, children's play equipment, softball diamonds, basketball and tennis courts, and soccer fields. A skateboard park and Interpretive Nature Trail are also provided at Culver City Park. Other recreational facilities in Culver City are a bike path along Ballona Creek and the Culver City Plunge, a municipal outdoor swimming pool.

The Culver City General Plan Open Space Element (approved July 22, 1996) identifies an overall deficiency in local park space (particularly for the McLaughlin and Lucerne-Higuera neighborhoods, located in the northwest and northeast portions of the City) and states that many of the City's older parks are in need of renovation, including Culver City Park. Among the policies aimed at achieving adequate park space and facilities is the policy to "[C]oordinate open space opportunities with West Los Angeles College for potential joint use of facilities."

Los Angeles County (Baldwin Hills) Recreational Facilities

The WLAC campus is surrounded to the east and north by the Baldwin Hills, an approximately 2 square mile area that is considered the largest remaining "open space" area within urban Los Angeles County. Although much of this area has been and continues to be used for oil and gas production and processing uses, the Baldwin Hills also includes about 450 acres of parkland providing active and passive recreational facilities, including the following major facilities:

- The Kenneth Hahn State Recreational Area, a 319-acre park including native habitat, lawns, picnic sites, tot lots, fishing lake, lotus pond, and trails;

- Vista Pacifica Scenic Site, a 68-acre open space area with a scenic view; and
- Ladera Ball Fields, a 31-acre area including three baseball diamonds.

Culver City Park is also considered part of the Baldwin Hills area. As described in Section V.H, Land Use, the State of California Resources Agency has prepared a Master Plan for future development of the 2 square-mile Baldwin Hills area as a park. The Plan envisions preservation and restoration of natural habitat along with the development of active and passive recreational facilities and educational and cultural facilities, including the following: approximately 300 acres of protected and restored natural lands; over 60 acres of multiple-use (softball, baseball, soccer) fields; a 120-acre, 18-hole golf course; a tennis center, skate parks, over 15 miles of jogging, bicycle, and hiking trails; playgrounds; indoor basketball courts, a recreation center and gymnasium, a par course, climbing wall; and a competition-sized swimming pool.

Thresholds of Significance

The proposed Project would cause impacts to recreational resources if it 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/or
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Project Impacts¹

Two aspects of the proposed project could result in the potential for increased use of existing local park and recreational facilities: (1) the anticipated increase in visitors to the area and (2) the construction of a second access road through an existing park. Demand for local recreational facilities is primarily generated by local residents. However, to a lesser extent, daytime population within an area, e.g., workers, students, and visitors, also may use local parks and recreational facilities. The proposed Project does not involve the construction of new residential units, but would increase the area's daytime population. The proposed Project is designed to accommodate an expected enrollment increase of 5,837 students between 2002 and 2015 (completion of Phase I) and 9,617 students between 2002 and 2022 (completion of Phase II, including Phase I increase). Employment level increases above 2001 levels are expected to reach 437 by 2015 and 732 at 2022. These figures are headcounts; they do not reflect full time equivalent (FTE) estimates. The proposed project includes the construction of a second access road, for which three preliminary alternative routes have been identified. Two of these routes would pass directly through existing park facilities. Alternative A would traverse through Culver City Park and Alternative B would pass through the Vista Pacifica Scenic Site. Alternative C would pass through a portion of the Baldwin Hills oil fields that does not currently include park facilities but may be developed with park facilities in the future, as envisioned in the Baldwin Hills Park Master Plan.

The projected increase in students and employees at the campus and traveling along the proposed second access road, is not expected to result in increased use of Culver City or Baldwin Hills recreational facilities to the extent that physical effects on those facilities would result, for the following reasons:

- The proposed Master Plan includes improvements to existing recreational facilities and the development of new active and passive recreational facilities on the WLAC campus that are designed to accommodate the projected future enrollment levels of the College. Phase I of the Master Plan includes the following recreational facilities and improvements:

¹ The physical effects associated with the construction and improvement of proposed on-campus recreational facilities are considered as part of the assessment of the project's impacts contained throughout this EIR. Therefore, this section focuses on potential impacts associated with increased use of existing facilities.

- Football field improvements (installation of artificial turf);
 - Replacement of existing dirt running track with a new all-weather synthetic running track;
 - A new walking trail; and
 - Passive open space facilities such as the addition of outdoor furniture, seating areas, and covered areas, as well as improved landscaping.
- Improvements to on-campus recreational facilities anticipated during Phase II of the proposed Master Plan include:
 - A new 13,200 square-foot Physical Education Building Annex, to include a basketball court and other ancillary facilities;
 - A new Ice Rink, with 2 ice-sheets and a skating surface large enough to support public skating, skating club use, and use by local hockey teams;
 - Community Center, a 13,200 square-foot facility open to the neighboring community and intended to provide space for meetings and general recreational use;
 - Permanent bleacher seats (2,000 seats), permanent restrooms, and lighting;
 - Replaced tennis courts (net increase of 2 courts) with new lighting; and
 - Baseball, softball, and throwing fields renovation and lighting.
 - Soccer field and ceremonial green.
 - Most of the facilities provided by local parks, including Culver City Park (through which the second access road under Alternative A would pass), are also available on-campus. It is anticipated that students and employees of the College are likely to use on-campus facilities rather than off-campus facilities because of the convenience of on-campus facilities, as well as the proposed improvements to these facilities described above. (See Section V.H, Land Use, for a discussion of direct physical impacts on Culver City Park associated with construction of a second access road Alternative A.)
 - Many of the recreational facilities are available for use by local teams and leagues. The proposed increase and improvement in the supply of recreational facilities at the College would partially offset community demands on existing local facilities as well providing facilities that that are not otherwise available in the area. For example, the project would add a community center, an ice-rink, 2 more tennis courts, more indoor recreational space with a basketball court, as well as improvements to existing recreational fields and other facilities.
 - Many students who attend the College are enrolled on a part-time basis for a limited number of courses. Many of these students also have jobs and typically commute to the College just to attend their class. These students do not typically stay on campus or in the area to use recreational facilities. The best examples are students who attend class in the evening after work. These students are also less likely to use local facilities as they are only in the area outside the hours of operation of most parks. Similarly many of the college's faculty teach part-time and, for example, may come to the campus to teach an evening class once a week.
 - Existing and planned regional recreational facilities within the Baldwin Hills are designed to accommodate demand of the larger surrounding urban area. As a point of reference, according to the Baldwin Hills Master Plan, over one million people live within 5 miles of the Baldwin Hills. To the extent that the facilities within the Baldwin Hills are intended to serve the region and that most of the students and employees are expected to reside within the Los Angeles area, their use of the park would not increase demand beyond that associated with the regional population. The second access road, if it were to follow the route identified as Alternative B, would increase the number of people driving along the Vista Pacifica scenic overlook. However, the proposed Project would also improve the roadway that provides access to

this overlook, offsetting potential adverse effects on the existing overlook and facilitating proposed improvements at this overlook as identified in the Baldwin Hills Master Plan. Alternative C would traverse an area that is currently not used for recreational purposes but is identified in the Baldwin Hills Master Plan as a potential future camping area. Students and campus employees traveling along this road are not expected to substantially increase the use of this type of facility.

Overall, the proposed project is not expected to increase the use of local recreational facilities to an extent that would in turn result in significant physical impacts on these facilities, because: the project includes improvements and additions to on-campus recreational facilities designed to serve the projected campus expansion; these facilities will also help to offset the community's demand for recreational facilities, and the proposed project's population is expected to primarily use on-campus facilities.

Cumulative Impacts

The related projects list provided in Chapter IV, Environmental Setting, identifies a number of residential and commercial facilities planned for the area surrounding the Project. The primary source of increased demand for recreational facilities would be generated by new residential development. The residential projects on the related projects list are in the City of Los Angeles and therefore are not generally expected to place substantial demand on Culver City parks. For private developments within Culver City, the City requires contribution of park land from new private developments and/or in-lieu fees to help meet this demand, thereby mitigating cumulative impacts of new development on local parks. In addition, the proposed Project's improvement of on-site recreational facilities and provision of new facilities would help to offset potential cumulative impacts. Therefore, the proposed project's impacts on parks and recreational facilities are not considered significant in a cumulative context.

Mitigation Measures

The proposed Project would not result in a significant impact on parks and recreational facilities in terms of physical effects due to increased use. Therefore, mitigation measures are not required. (See Section V.H, Land Use, for a discussion of impacts on existing and planned recreational facilities in terms of direct physical impacts or potential incompatibilities (e.g., impacts associated with construction of an access road through Culver City Park.)

Significant Project Impacts After Mitigation

The proposed project would not result in a significant unavoidable impact on recreation or park facilities.