

II. Introduction



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A. Purpose

This introduction is intended to provide the reader with general information regarding: (1) the purpose of an environmental impact report (EIR); (2) standards for EIR adequacy; (3) an introduction to the format and content of this EIR; and (4) the EIR processing requirements for the ArtCenter College of Design Master Plan. Environmental documents can be complicated; therefore, this section is provided to educate the reader regarding the intent, format, and content of this EIR so that it can be more easily understood.

B. Project Description

The ArtCenter College of Design (ArtCenter), the Project Applicant, is proposing to implement a 15-year Master Plan (the Project) that focuses growth on its South Campus, while providing for infrastructure improvements and building renovations on its Hillside Campus. Specifically, within the South Campus, the Project would include renovations to existing buildings, demolition of an existing structure and surface parking lots, construction of new buildings for student housing, student amenities and academic uses, development of outdoor quad areas, construction of a campus Cycleway and mobility hub that may potentially include a compressed natural gas (CNG) fueling facility, and installation of photovoltaic (PV) solar cells on the rooftop of the buildings. Improvements within the Hillside Campus would include renovations and additions to existing buildings, potential installation of a CNG fueling facility near the new Commuter Services and Facilities Hub at the expanded South Building, demolition of an existing temporary building and restoration of parking in its place, installation of PV solar cells and canopies over the existing surface parking stalls, and modifications to campus access. The Project would be implemented in two phases, with Phase I in the first five years, although it could be completed as early as 2022, and Phase II occurring between 2022 and 2032. It is anticipated that, upon completion of the Project, total enrollment within ArtCenter would increase from its current enrollment of approximately 2,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) students to a maximum of 2,500 FTE students and increase faculty/staff from 753 faculty/staff members to approximately 994 faculty/staff members between the two campuses.

Improvements to the Hillside Campus as part of Phase I include removal of the Annex Building and restoration of parking in its place, enclosure of the existing open-air student (Sinclair) pavilion, installation of PV canopies, and modification to the parking and circulation plan. During Phase II, the South Building would be reconstructed and expanded to house the new Commuter Services and Facilities Hub.

The majority of Project improvements would take place on the South Campus. Within the South Campus, Phase I of the Project proposes to construct two new buildings that would be primarily dedicated to student housing (one on the 988 S. Raymond Avenue parcel, referred to as the 988 Building, and a second building on the 1111 S. Arroyo Parkway parcel, referred to as the new 1101 Building). This phase would also include interior renovation of the existing building located at 1111 S. Arroyo Parkway, referred to as the 1111 Building, and the addition of pedestrian campus connections between the two proposed student housing buildings. The 1111 and 988 buildings would initially be connected with a temporary pedestrian bridge that spans over the Metro Gold Line, and later, a Main Quad. The Main Quad would be a large open space that connects all three buildings (1101, 1111, and 988) and constructed over the Metro Gold Line. The existing building located at 950 S. Raymond Avenue, referred to as the 950 Building, would undergo interior renovations, and an additional 40,000 square feet of floor area would be created within the building footprint to accommodate new exhibition space on a mezzanine level or second floor. Phase II would include construction of four buildings located on a common podium located as 888 S. Raymond Avenue, collectively referred to as the 888 Building. The 888 Building would consist of academic space, potential additional student housing, parking, and multi-purpose/institutional space. In addition, Phase II includes the creation of a North Quad and a northerly extension of the Cycleway to link all buildings along South Raymond Avenue.

C. Purpose and Legal Authority

Subsequent to the passage of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in 1970, a process was established that would: (1) inform governmental decision makers and the public about the potentially significant environmental effects of proposed activities; (2) identify ways that environmental damage can be avoided or significantly reduced; (3) prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment by requiring changes in projects through the use of alternatives or mitigation measures when the governmental agency finds the changes to be feasible; and (4) disclose to the public the reasons why a governmental agency approved the project in the manner the agency chose if significant environmental effects are involved. This information is the basis of any EIR.

This EIR is to serve as an informational document for the public and decision makers of the City of Pasadena. The EIR process will culminate with City Council hearings to consider certification of a Final EIR and consideration of the Project.

D. EIR Adequacy

The principal use of an EIR is to provide input and information as one aspect of a comprehensive planning analysis. Given the important role of the EIR in this planning and decision-making process, it is imperative that the information presented in the EIR be factual, adequate, and complete. The standards for adequacy of an EIR, defined in Section 15151 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*,¹ are as follows:

An EIR should be prepared with 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. An evaluation of the environmental effects of a proposed project need not be exhaustive, but the sufficiency of an EIR is to be reviewed in light of what is reasonably feasible. Disagreement among experts does not make an EIR inadequate, but the EIR should summarize the main points of disagreement among the experts. The courts have looked not for perfection but for adequacy, completeness, and a good faith effort at full disclosure.

This EIR has been prepared by the City of Pasadena in accordance with CEQA, the *State CEQA Guidelines*, and City guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

E. Lead, Responsible, and Trustee Agencies

The CEQA Guidelines define “lead,” “responsible,” and “trustee” agencies. The City of Pasadena is the lead agency for the Project because it is the public agency that has the principal responsibility for approving the Project.

A “responsible agency” refers to a public agency other than the “lead agency” that has discretionary approval over the Project. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) has been identified as a responsible agency as the Project would require Metro’s approval of the temporary pedestrian bridge and Main Quad proposed over the Metro Gold Line to connect the 988, 1101, and 1111 Buildings. In addition, the Project would require Metro’s approval of the proposed tunnel below the

¹ *State of California, State CEQA Guidelines, as amended July 11, 2006, Section 15002(a) of the California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Chapter 3.*

Metro Gold Line that would connect the subterranean garages under the 988, 1101, and 1111 Buildings. In the event of potential encroachment during construction of the South Building expansion into waters of the State, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and the Regional Water Quality Control Board would be responsible agencies for the project. In addition, pursuant to Section 15386 of the State CEQA Guidelines, the CDFW is a “trustee agency” with regard to the fish and wildlife of the state, designated rare or endangered plants, or game refuges, ecological reserves, and other areas administered by CDFW.

F. Environmental Review Process

The environmental review process, as required under CEQA, is summarized below. The steps are presented in sequential order.

1. Notice of Preparation (NOP) Distributed

Immediately after deciding that an EIR is required, the lead agency sends an NOP to the Office of Planning and Research (OPR) and each responsible and trustee agency, stating that an EIR will be prepared. This notice is also sent to every federal agency involved in approving or funding the project and to parties previously requesting notice in writing. Per the *State CEQA Guidelines*, an NOP is to be circulated for 30 days, allowing agencies and the public the opportunity to provide the lead agency with specific detail about their desires for the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. A scoping meeting to solicit public input on the issues to be assessed in the EIR is not required but may be conducted by the lead agency.

2. Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) Prepared

The Draft EIR must contain: (1) a table of contents or index; (2) a summary; (3) a project description; (4) environmental setting; (5) significant impacts (direct, indirect, cumulative, growth-inducing and unavoidable impacts); (6) alternatives; (7) mitigation measures, as necessary; and (8) irreversible changes.

3. Public Notice and Review

The lead agency must prepare a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR. The Notice must be placed in the County Clerk’s office for 30 days (Public Resources Code Section 21092.3) and sent to parties previously requesting such notice in writing. Additionally, public notice of Draft EIR availability must be given through at least one of the following procedures: (1) publication in a newspaper of general circulation; (2) posting on and off the

Project Site; and/or (3) direct mailing to owners and occupants of contiguous properties. The lead agency must consult with and request comments on the Draft EIR from responsible and trustee agencies, and adjacent cities and counties. The minimum public review period for a Draft EIR is 30 days. When a Draft EIR is sent to the State Clearinghouse for review, the public review period must be 45 days, unless a shorter period is approved by the State Clearinghouse (Public Resources Code Section 21091). Distribution of the Draft EIR may be required through the State Clearinghouse.

4. Notice of Completion

The lead agency must file a Notice of Completion with the State Clearinghouse as soon as it completes a Draft EIR.

5. Final EIR

A Final EIR must include: (1) the Draft EIR or a revision thereof; (2) comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR; (3) list of persons and entities commenting; and (4) responses to comments.

6. Certification of Final EIR

Prior to approving a project, the lead agency shall certify that: (1) the Final EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA; (2) the Final EIR was presented to the decision-making body of the lead agency and the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the Final EIR prior to approving a project; and (3) the Final EIR reflects the lead agency's independent judgment and analysis.

7. Lead Agency Project Decision

With regard to an EIR, the lead agency may: (1) disapprove a project because of its significant environmental effects; (2) require changes to a project to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects; or (3) approve a project despite its significant environmental effects, if the proper findings and statement of overriding considerations are adopted.

8. Findings/Statement of Overriding Considerations

For each significant impact of the project identified in the EIR, the lead or responsible agency must find, based on substantial evidence, that: (1) the project has been changed to avoid or substantially reduce the magnitude of the impact; (2) changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project which avoid or

substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the Final EIR; (3) such changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and not the agency making the finding, and such changes have been adopted by such other agency or can and should be adopted by such other agency; or (4) 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. If an agency approves a project with unavoidable significant environmental effects, it must prepare a written Statement of Overriding Considerations that sets forth the specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other reasons supporting the agency's decision.

9. Mitigation Monitoring/Reporting Program

When an agency makes findings on significant effects identified in the EIR, it must adopt a reporting or monitoring program for mitigation measures that were adopted or made conditions of project approval to mitigate significant effects.

10. Notice of Determination

An agency must file a Notice of Determination after deciding to approve a project for which an EIR is prepared. A local agency must file the Notice with the County Clerk. The Notice must be posted for 30 days. Posting of the Notice starts a 30-day statute of limitations on CEQA challenges.

G. EIR Format and Content

1. Report Format

Among the principal objectives of CEQA is that the environmental review process be a public one, and that the EIR be an informational document for governmental decision makers and the public about potential significant environmental effects of proposed activities.

The environmental impact analysis presented in this EIR is divided into 16 major sections within Section IV, Environmental Impact Analysis, which describe the existing conditions present in the area surrounding the Project Site, predict the potential Project-level and cumulative impacts attributable to the development of the ArtCenter Master Plan, present mitigation measures that are intended to minimize or avoid significant impacts caused by the Project, and identify the significant impacts that would occur after implementation of mitigation measures.

2. Report Content

(a) Notice of Preparation

To determine which environmental topics should be addressed in this EIR, the City of Pasadena prepared an Initial Study, which is provided in Appendix A-1 of this Draft EIR, and circulated an NOP, which is provided in Appendix A-2 of this Draft EIR, from September 2, 2016, through October 3, 2016. The NOP was circulated in order to receive input from interested public agencies (e.g., responsible and trustee agencies) and private parties on the EIR. A copy of the letters and comments received during the NOP comment period are provided in Appendix A-3 to this Draft EIR.

(b) Scoping Meetings

The City held two scoping meetings during the NOP comment period—a community meeting on September 20, 2016, and a second one before the City Planning Commission on September 28, 2016, to solicit comments and to inform the public of the Project and the EIR.

(c) Topics Addressed in the EIR

This EIR addresses the issues determined to be potentially significant in the Initial Study, and considers the responses to the NOP and the input from neighbors in the community provided during the NOP comment period, including the comments provided during the scoping meetings. This EIR addresses these issues and identifies potentially significant environmental impacts of the Project and cumulative development in the City in accordance with provisions set forth in the *State CEQA Guidelines*. The EIR also recommends feasible mitigation measures, where possible, that would reduce or eliminate adverse environmental effects. The issues addressed in this EIR include:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gases
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use
- Noise
- Public Services—Fire Protection
- Traffic

- Utilities and Service Systems—
Water Supply and Infrastructure,
Wastewater, Solid Waste, Energy

In addition to these technical sections, other important information is incorporated as part of this EIR. As required by CEQA, this EIR also includes: (1) a description of the existing environmental and regulatory setting; (2) a description of the Project; (3) a description and analysis of alternatives that can reduce the Project's impact potential (included in Section V, Alternatives); and (4) sections that summarize cumulative, long-term, and irreversible effects associated with the Project.

Documents referred to, referenced or cited, are available for review at the City of Pasadena, Planning & Community Development Department, 175 North Garfield Avenue, Pasadena, California 91101. In addition, this document and its appendices may be downloaded or reviewed via the Internet at: www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/art-center-college-of-design-master-plan/.

3. Availability of the Draft EIR

The Draft EIR has been distributed to affected agencies, surrounding cities, and interested parties in accordance with Section 15087 of the *State CEQA Guidelines*. During the public review period, which commences on October 26, 2017, and ends on December 11, 2017, the Draft EIR is available for general public review at the following locations:

- Office of the City Clerk, 100 N. Garfield Avenue, Room S228, Pasadena.
- City of Pasadena Planning Department at 175 North Garfield Avenue.
- Pasadena Central Library, 285 E. Walnut Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91101.
- Pasadena Allendale Branch Library, 1130 S. Marengo Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91106.
- Pasadena Linda Vista Branch Library, 1281 Bryant Street, Pasadena, CA 91103.

Additionally, the Draft EIR can be downloaded or reviewed via the Internet at www.cityofpasadena.net/planning/art-center-college-of-design-master-plan/.

Interested parties may provide written comments on the Draft EIR. Written comments on the Draft EIR must be received by December 11, 2017, and should be addressed to:

David Sinclair, Senior Planner
City of Pasadena Planning & Community Development Department
175 N. Garfield Avenue
Pasadena, CA 91101
dsinclair@cityofpasadena.net

Upon completion of the 45-day public review period, written responses to all comments on environmental issues discussed in the Draft EIR will be prepared and incorporated into the Final EIR. These comments, and their responses, will be included in the Final EIR for consideration by the City of Pasadena, as well as other public decision makers.