

## PREFACE TO FINAL EIR

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In compliance with California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15132, this document, in combination with the Draft Environmental Impact Report (SCH No. 2016121025) (April 2017) (Draft EIR) serves as the Final Environmental Impact Report (Final EIR) for the proposed California State University/San Diego State University (collectively, SDSU) New Student Housing Project. The Draft EIR was made available for public review and comment for a 45-day period, beginning on April 21, 2017, and ending on June 5, 2017.

Section 15132 requires that the Final EIR consist of the following components:

- a. The Draft EIR or a revision of the draft;
- b. Comments and recommendations received on the Draft EIR either verbatim or in summary;
- c. A list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR;
- d. The responses of the Lead Agency to significant environmental points raised in the review and consultation process; and
- e. Any other information added by the Lead Agency.

As required, this document contains the public comments received in response to the Draft EIR, as well as SDSU's written responses to those comments. Also, a list of the persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR is provided. In addition, this document also contains revisions to the Draft EIR, as appropriate.

### INTRODUCTION

This **Preface**, which serves as an introduction to the Final EIR, provides a summary of the public review process; an overview of the Final EIR contents; a description of the project modifications since circulation of the Draft EIR; and a summary of the modifications made to the Draft EIR text in response to comments and community input received during the public comment period.

#### *Public Review Process*

The Board of Trustees of the California State University, acting as lead agency, prepared a Draft EIR to inform decision-makers and the public of the potential significant environmental effects associated with the proposed SDSU New Student Housing Project. The Draft EIR was circulated for public review and comment for 45 days, from April 21, 2017, through June 5, 2017. A Public Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR was published in a newspaper of general circulation,

mailed to all organizations and individuals previously requesting notice, and posted with the Office of the San Diego County Clerk. SDSU provided copies of the complete Draft EIR with appendices to the State Clearinghouse, which, in turn, distributed the Draft EIR to all interested state agencies for review and comment. Copies of the Draft EIR were delivered to libraries in the affected communities.

The public review process included a series of meetings and presentations to various groups and organizations. SDSU staff and the EIR consultants appeared at multiple community group meetings held prior to, during, and after the public review period to provide the community with an overview of the Draft EIR and the proposed project, and to answer the community's questions. (Please see Final EIR Appendix M-6.)

This Final EIR contains the comments received on the Draft EIR, SDSU's responses to those comments, and additional materials relating to the Comments and Responses process.

### *Overview of the Final EIR*

In addition to the Draft EIR (April 2017), the Final EIR consists of the following components, in the following order:

1. Revised Draft EIR
2. Comments and Responses
3. Supplemental Appendix Materials

The **Revised Draft EIR** section contains the Draft EIR, which has been revised in response to the public comments and related project modifications. New, additional text is noted in double underline; deleted text is noted in ~~strikeout~~. Please note that all footers on all pages of the Draft EIR have been updated to reflect a Final EIR publication date of September 2017. However, because this footer update does not constitute a substantive edit, this change is not shown in ~~strikeout~~/underline in this section of the Final EIR.

The **Comments and Responses** section includes the following components, presented in the following order:

1. Thematic Responses
2. Alphabetical Index by Author
3. Comment Letters and Responses

**Thematic Responses** provide detailed responses to frequently raised comments.

The **Alphabetical Index by Author** lists the author of each comment letter, along with the date of the letter, the assigned letter ID number, and the page in the Responses to Comments section where SDSU's responses to the comments are provided. The index, which serves as a list of the persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft EIR, is provided to assist the reader in accessing particular comments and the related responses.

With respect to the letter ID number, at the close of the public review period, each comment letter received during the review period was "bracketed," a process by which the individual comments contained in a letter are designated separately, and assigned a unique identification number. All comment numbers consist of three components. The first component is a letter designation based on the origin of the comment, i.e., whether the comment originated from a state agency (S); local agency (L); private organization (O); or a company, corporation, or an individual (I). The second component is the number assigned to a particular letter. The third component is the number assigned to a specific comment within that letter. For example, the comments submitted by the City of San Diego have been designated L5-1 through L5-44. L indicates that the City of San Diego is a "Local Agency," 5 indicates that the letter is the fifth local agency letter, and 1-44 identifies each individual comment.

The **Comment Letters and Responses** section contains copies of the actual comment letters and attachments that SDSU received, with corresponding written responses immediately following each letter.

The Supplemental **Appendix Materials** section includes additional technical materials prepared in connection with the Final EIR process, as well as revised pages to appendices originally circulated as part of the Draft EIR. Please note that appendices circulated as part of the Draft EIR that have not been revised since publication of the Draft EIR are not included here.

### ***Project Modifications***

As analyzed in the Draft EIR, the proposed project consisted of the development of facilities to accommodate 2,566 student housing beds. The proposed project analyzed in the Draft EIR would be developed in three successive phases: the first phase would include construction of dormitory facilities to house up to 850 student beds and a related food services building on the existing Parking Lot 9, east of the existing Chapultepec Hall; the second phase would include construction of facilities to house up to an additional 850 student beds in the area located to the west of the existing Chapultepec Hall; and the third phase would include construction of facilities to house up to an additional 866 student beds in buildings that would cantilever over the canyon behind Chapultepec Hall. The buildings developed in connection with the three

phases, except for a two-story dining hall, would consist of up to 4- to 14-story buildings of single-, double-, and triple-occupancy student housing units.

Consistent with this phasing approach, the Draft EIR addressed, where applicable, the environmental impacts that potentially could arise with the construction and development of each phase. That is, where applicable, the Draft EIR identified the potential impacts that would result with implementation of Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III of the proposed project, and included corresponding mitigation where necessary.

In response to comments received during the public review process, including, but not limited to, comments made at meetings with the public and other interested parties, on May 8, 2017, SDSU President Elliot Hirshman announced that the proposed project would be modified from that proposed in the Draft EIR in order to *reduce* the environmental impacts of the project. In response to President Hirshman's directive, the proposed project was modified to eliminate Phase III and reduce the height of Phase II. These modifications would result in *reduced* environmental impacts, including the elimination of significant unavoidable impacts.

Following these modifications, state and local elected officials continued to raise concerns with the proposed project and urged SDSU to further reduce the size of the project by eliminating Phase II in its entirety. In response, Phase II has been eliminated from the proposed project such that the proposed project to be considered by the CSU Board of Trustees for approval will include only Phase I; that is, the proposed project is now a Phase I only project. SDSU commits that it has no intent to proceed with Phases II and III of the original proposed project.

For an illustration of the proposed project's modifications, please see Figure 1-2, Proposed Site Design, which visually depicts the modified project site plan consisting of the following components:

- The elimination of Phase III, which reduces the project's bed count by 866;
- The elimination of Phase II, which reduces the project's bed count by an additional 850; and
- A modified site layout for Phase 1.

Based on the modifications to the proposed project, the total number of beds to be provided by the project would be approximately 850 student housing beds.

As modified, the proposed project to be considered for approval by the Board of Trustees is the Reduced Density Alternative addressed in Draft EIR Section 6, Alternatives, subsection 6.3.2. While not required, to facilitate public review of the project modifications, the Draft EIR has

been revised to reflect the elimination of project Phases II and III. For example, Chapter 2.0, Project Description, has been revised to reflect a Phase I project only, as has the Draft EIR Executive Summary, including Table ES-2, Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures. In addition, Draft EIR Chapter 4.0, Environmental Analysis, has been revised as applicable to reflect the modified proposed project. The revised Draft EIR is included in the Final EIR, Chapter 2.0, Revised Draft EIR. Here is a summary of the revisions since publication of the Draft EIR:

- Executive Summary. As illustrated in Table ES-2, Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures, the proposed project modifications would result in substantially reduced potential environmental impacts, including the elimination of significant unavoidable impacts, and, correspondingly, would eliminate the need for certain mitigation measures and the revision of others.
- EIR Chapter 1, Introduction. Revised to reflect the modified project.
- EIR Chapter 2, Project Description. Revised to reflect the modified project, and also revised in response to public comments to include additional project design features, including off-street parking for six vehicles on the north side of Remington Road for pick-up/drop-off purposes, and the accommodation of a move in/move out zone on the north side of the buildings, away from Remington Road.
- EIR Chapter 3, Cumulative Methods and Projects. Revised to reflect the modified project.
- EIR Chapter 4.1, Aesthetics, and related figures. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the elimination of significant unavoidable impacts to visual character/quality of the project site.
- EIR Chapter 4.2, Air Quality. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.3, Biological Resources. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the elimination of significant impacts that would have resulted with development of Phases II and III. Additional revisions made in response to public comments include revisions to mitigation measures due to the results of avian surveys demonstrating the absence of gnatcatchers at the project site, and the addition of an avian monitoring plan provided in response to community concerns regarding nesting birds.
- EIR Chapter 4.4, Cultural Resources. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.

- EIR Chapter 4.5, Energy. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.6, Geotechnical Resources. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.7, Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III, and in response to comments regarding SDSU's Climate Action Plan.
- EIR Chapter 4.8, Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potentially significant impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.9, Hydrology and Water Quality. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.10, Land Use and Planning. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.11, Noise. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.12, Population and Housing. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.13, Public Services. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the reduction of potential significant impacts that would have resulted with the development of Phases II and III.
- EIR Chapter 4.14, Transportation/Circulation and Parking. Revised to reflect the modified project, which results in the elimination of potentially significant impacts related to roadway infrastructure; potentially significant temporary construction-related impacts would remain.
- EIR Chapter 6, Alternatives. Revised to reflect a modified proposed project.

Lastly, in response to certain comments requesting that the Draft EIR be recirculated in light of the project modifications, under CEQA recirculation of the Draft EIR is necessary only if “significant new information” has been added to the EIR. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21092.1; 14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15088.5, subd. (a).) The new information is “significant” when it: (i) shows a new, substantial environmental impact resulting either from the project or from a mitigation measure; (ii) shows a substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact, except that recirculation would not be required if mitigation that reduces the impact to insignificance is adopted; or (iii) shows a feasible alternative or mitigation measure, considerably different from those considered in the EIR, that clearly would lessen the significant environmental impacts of a project and the project proponent declines to adopt it. (See *Laurel Heights Improvement Assn. v. Regents of the Univ. of Cal.* (1993) 6 Cal.4th 1112, 1130.)

Here, the new information -- elimination of Phases II and III -- does not show new, substantial environmental impacts and, to the contrary, results in *reduced* impacts. Furthermore, as noted above, where applicable, the Draft EIR separately analyzed the potential environmental impacts resulting from each phase of the proposed project, with corresponding mitigation identified as necessary. Lastly, the new information shows neither a feasible alternative nor mitigation measure considerably different from those in the EIR, that clearly would lessen the significant environmental impacts. In sum, the elimination of Phases II and III does not constitute “significant new information” within the meaning of CEQA and, as such, recirculation is not required.

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