

5.0 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

5.1 CEQA REQUIREMENTS FOR PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Alternatives to the proposed project must be evaluated under Section 15126.6 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Final EIR for the 1998 Facilities Master Plan evaluated a No Project Alternative and an Upgrade Existing Facilities Alternative. Because an Environmental Impact Report must identify ways to mitigate or avoid the significant effects that a project may have on the environment, the discussion of alternatives focuses on changes to the project or the project's location which are capable of achieving the objectives of the proposed project while avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects associated with the project.

In the scope of alternatives to be examined in an EIR, the public agency must be guided by the doctrine of "feasibility." In the event specific economic, social, or other conditions make infeasible such project alternatives or such mitigation measures, individual projects may be approved in spite of one or more significant effects thereof. (Public Resources Code Section 21002)

The Legislature has defined "feasible" for purposes of CEQA review as "capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social and technological factors." (Public Resources Code Section 21061.1; Guidelines Section 15364). In addition, among the factors that may be taken into account when addressing the feasibility of alternatives are 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. (Guidelines Section 15126.6) A project alternative which cannot be feasibly accomplished need not be extensively considered.

5.2 DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

Although an infinite number of alternatives and variations could be identified, EIRs are not required to "consider an alternative whose effects cannot be reasonably ascertained and whose implementation is considered to be remote and speculative."¹ As a result, this alternatives analysis focuses on those development options that could be implemented and which, if implemented, would have the potential to reduce or avoid any significant adverse environmental effects associated with the proposed project.

Although CEQA Guidelines direct lead agencies to consider the feasibility of one or more alternate locations, that alternative is not required: "if the lead agency concludes that no feasible alternative location exists," however, "it must disclose the reasons for this conclusion and should include the reasons in the EIR."² Two alternatives to the proposed project were identified for study in this EIR.

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative. The No Project Alternative assumes that the proposed project would not be implemented. The No Project Alternative allows decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed project with the impacts of not approving the proposed project, and does not mean that development on the project site will be prohibited. The No Project Alternative includes "what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services" (CEQA Section 15126.6 [e][2]). In this case, the No Project Alternative assumes the existing campus would continue to operate at its current condition, and the new facilities and renovations proposed as part of the 2009 Facilities Master Plan Update (proposed project) would not occur.

¹Section 15126(d)(5)(C), State CEQA Guidelines.

²Section 15126.6(f)(2)(b), State CEQA Guidelines.

Alternative 2: Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative. The Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative assumes that the three campus marquees would utilize an illuminated display that could be dimmed to a 400 foot-lamberts (fl) level of illumination, the allowable light intensity of the illuminated signs within 100 feet of residential properties, as defined in the Monterey Park Municipal Code Section 21.50.070, Sign Regulations, General Requirements. All of the other components of the proposed project would be implemented under the Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF ALTERNATIVES

Aesthetics and Lighting

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative. The project site aesthetics and lighting would remain unchanged under Alternative 1, and the aesthetic improvements to the campus, which include new facilities, modernizations and renovations to campus buildings and facilities and the addition of open space associated with the proposed athletic fields, would not be realized. Potential light and glare impacts resulting from exterior security lighting for the proposed parking structure and vehicle headlights in the parking structure onto the adjacent residential buildings to the north the project site would not occur under Alternative 1. Likewise, the unavoidable significant impact related to spillover light from the proposed illuminated marquee signs onto adjacent residential properties to the north and south of the project site would not occur under Alternative 1. Alternative 1 would result in no impacts to aesthetics and lighting.

Alternative 2: Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative. Under Alternative 2, the aesthetic improvements to the campus (i.e., the new facilities, modernizations and renovations to campus building and facilities and the addition of open space associated with the proposed athletic fields) would be implemented. However, the three illuminated campus marquee signs would be dimmed to a 400 foot-lamberts (fl) level of illumination under Alternative 2. Similar to the proposed project, potential light and glare impacts resulting from exterior security lighting for the proposed parking structure and vehicle headlights in the parking structure onto the adjacent residential buildings to the north the project site would occur under Alternative 2. However, the unavoidable significant impact related to spillover light from the proposed illuminated marquee signs onto adjacent residential properties located to the north and south of the project site would not occur under Alternative 2. Alternative 2 would result in less-than-significant impacts to aesthetics and lighting.

Air Quality

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative. Alternative 1 would not include any additional construction activity beyond what was previously authorized under the Final EIR and subsequent addendums, and no construction emissions would be generated. Therefore, Alternative 1 would not result in construction air quality impacts. However, under the No Project Alternative, student enrollment would be expected to continue to increase similar to the proposed project. Therefore, as motor vehicles trips are the predominate source of long-term project emissions, operational emissions would still exceed the SCAQMD regional significance threshold for NO_x, and localized significance thresholds for PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀. Alternative 1 would result in an unavoidable significant operational air quality impact.

Alternative 2: Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative. Alternative 2 would include a similar amount of construction activity as the proposed project. Therefore, localized construction emissions and operational air quality impacts would be similar to the proposed project under Alternative 2, Alternative 2 would result in an unavoidable significant air quality impact.

Cultural Resources

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative. Alternative 1 would not involve any additional construction activity beyond what was previously authorized under the Final EIR and subsequent addendums, therefore, Alternative 1 would result in no impacts to cultural resources.

Alternative 2: Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative. Under Alternative 2, the same campus buildings would be demolished and renovated as the proposed project. The assessment of the campus buildings concluded that none of the buildings embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represent the work of an important creative individual and none of the building on campus are considered eligible for the California Register. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would result in no impacts to cultural resources.

Land Use and Planning

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative. Alternative 1 would not involve any improvements beyond what was previously authorized under the Final EIR and subsequent addendums. Therefore, the No Project Alternative would maintain consistency with the existing land use designation and zoning for the project site. However, the beneficial effects of renovating the campus with new and modernized facilities would not occur. Similar to the proposed project, Alternative 1 would result in no impacts related to land use and planning.

Alternative 2: Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative. Under Alternative 2, the three illuminated campus marquee signs would be dimmed to a 400 foot-lamberts (fl) level of illumination. Therefore, the potential land use compatibility impact related to the placement of illuminated signs within 100 feet of residential uses would not occur. Under Alternative 2, the building heights of the new facilities would still exceed the R-1 zone 30-foot height restriction. Nonetheless, as the LACCD is exempt from the City of Monterey Park zoning Code, Alternative 2 would result in no impacts related to land use and planning.

Noise

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative. Alternative 1 would not include any additional construction activity beyond what was previously authorized under the Final EIR and subsequent addendums, and no and no additional construction noise would be created. Alternative 1 would not result in construction noise impacts. However, under the No Project Alternative, student enrollment would be expected to increase similar to the proposed project. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, mobile noise generated by the Alternative 1 would result in a less-than-significant impact.

Alternative 2: Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative. Alternative 2 would include a similar amount of construction activity as the proposed project. Therefore, similar to the proposed project, construction noise would result in an unavoidable significant impact. Mobile noise generated by the Alternative 2 would be similar to the proposed project and would result in a less-than-significant impact.

Transportation and Traffic

Alternative 1: No Project Alternative. As student enrollment would be expected to continue to increase similar to the proposed project, Alternative 2 would generate similar traffic volumes and parking demand as the proposed project. However, the No Project Alternative would not result in the beneficial effects that would result from the implementation of the mitigation measures that have been identified for the proposed project. Therefore, unlike the proposed project, Alternative 1 would result in unavoidable significant impacts on traffic and parking.

Alternative 2: Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative. Alternative 2 would generate similar traffic volumes and parking demand as the proposed project and require the same mitigation measures as the proposed project. Therefore, impacts related traffic and parking would be less than significant under Alternative 2.

5.4 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

Section 15126.6 (e)(2) of the State CEQA Guidelines requires that an environmentally superior alternative be identified among the selected alternatives (excluding the No Project alternative). The Environmentally Superior Alternative as discussed in this Supplemental EIR is Alternative 2 (Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative) as it would eliminate one potential significant impact as compared to the proposed project. Under the Substitute Campus Marquees Alternative, the unavoidable significant impact related to spillover light onto adjacent residential properties located to the north and south of the project site from the proposed illuminated marquee signs would not occur. The potential land use compatibility impact related to the placement of illuminated signs within 100 feet of residential uses would not occur under Alternative 2, yet the new facilities and modernizations would enable the college to accommodate the needs of the students and faculty similar to the proposed project. In addition, infrastructure upgrades would result in technological and aesthetic improvements, improved safety through building improvements, lighting and adequate and convenient parking, and the ability to maintain and/or increase course offerings and programs.