

CHAPTER 4 - ALTERNATIVES

4-1 INTRODUCTION

Section 15126.6(a) of the *State CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR “describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives.” The word “feasible” is defined by the *State CEQA Guidelines* as “...capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors” (§ 15364).

The objectives of the proposed Los Angeles Valley College Facilities Master Plan are to:

- To provide the appropriate facilities to meet Valley College’s commitment to the communities it serves, including daytime and evening students and the neighborhood community, by expanding and improving its educational and athletic facilities and community-oriented programs.
- To design new facilities to meet the needs of current and future students and current and future curriculum and teaching methodologies. Current curriculum will continue to provide students with the skills needed to be successful in their chosen fields, but new facilities must be designed to meet the future of educational technology and educational needs of a global economy.
- To develop and plan for the infrastructure required for state-of-the-art educational facilities designed to expand to accommodate changing technologies, including both new methods of teaching and educating students, as well as the equipment to support that effort.
- To create a more aesthetic, active and productive Valley College: educationally, economically, and in relationship to the community.
- To create a more harmonious and vibrant sense of place that defines Valley College as a unique and valued asset to the educational community and the San Fernando community.
- To create a revitalized Valley College presence that builds upon its special physical characteristics, recognizing the existing architectural and landscape features that are to be enhanced by new buildings, the development of exterior space, and new landscaping and site features.
- To create and design facilities and site improvements that promote the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEEDTM) Green Building standards.
- To provide a systematic approach and plan to expand existing facilities at Los Angeles Valley College in order to support increased projected future enrollment and future educational needs.

This chapter discusses Master Plan alternatives to elements of the Master Plan that were previously developed during the Master Plan planning process as well as an alternative enrollment scenario that have been identified to reduce or avoid the unavoidable significant adverse environmental effects of the proposed Master Plan (air quality; see Sections 3-3 for detailed discussions of these effects). Also provided below is a discussion of the No Project Alternative as required by CEQA. Additionally, Section 4-6 discusses the “Environmentally Superior Alternative” as required by Section 1526.6(e)(2) of the *State CEQA Guidelines*.

4-2 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

According to the *State CEQA Guidelines* (Section 15126.6(e)(3)(B)), the No Project Alternative is defined as the “circumstance under which the project does not proceed.” The impacts of the No Project Alternative shall be analyzed “by projecting what would reasonably be 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.” The purpose of describing and analyzing the No Project Alternative is “to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed Project with the impacts of not approving the proposed Project.”

Under the No Project Alternative, no comprehensive program of improvement projects would be implemented. The Valley College campus would largely remain as is and would continue to operate and provide services in a manner similar to current conditions. New improvements and renovation work would be minimal and intermittent, and would consist primarily of those campus projects already approved and funded. Maintenance activities would continue consistent with present and recent past practices. As a result of the limited extent of improvements that might occur under the No Project Alternative, future enrollment growth at the College could be constrained and would likely be less than the 23,000 total enrolled students and 15,693 FTE students projected for the 2008-2009 academic year under the Master Plan. However, given recent trends, it is expected that some increases in student enrollment would still occur.

As a consequence, the No Project Alternative project would not result in any of the significant or potentially significant impacts of the proposed project described in Chapter 3 of this EIR.

Specifically, the No Project Alternative would not result in any adverse visual impacts. However, the No Project Alternative would also not result in extensive improvements that would enhance the appearance and visual quality of the campus, e.g., new landscaping and green space, renovation of existing facilities, and construction of new facilities, that would occur under the Master Plan. Additionally, the No Project Alternative would result in further deterioration of existing buildings and campus facilities.

The extensive construction proposed under the Master Plan could result in emissions, after mitigation, of nitrogen oxides during the peak construction day and quarter and particulate matter (PM₁₀) on the peak construction day that would exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District significance thresholds, an unavoidable significant adverse impact. In addition, the increase in student enrollment and College employees that would occur under the Master Plan would result in increased traffic and resulting pollutant emissions (carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds) that would exceed South Coast Air Quality Management

District significance thresholds. These impacts would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

Since the amount of construction that would occur under the No Project Alternative would be limited, it would be less likely than the Master Plan to disturb, destroy, or alter any unknown archaeological or paleontological resources that may be present on the campus.

Neither the No Project Alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in unavoidable significant geologic or seismic hazards. However, under the No Project Alternative, older buildings on campus, which do not meet current seismic safety codes, would remain.

Master Plan construction that occurs in areas where hazardous materials are used or stored could result in potentially significant impacts. Additionally, renovation of older buildings on the campus under the Master Plan could result in exposure of asbestos-containing building materials and/or lead-based paint contaminants, a potentially significant but mitigable impact. Since the amount of renovation work that might occur under the No Project Alternative would be minimal, this alternative is less likely to result in the exposure of hazardous building materials than the Master Plan. Conversely, it is more likely that these hazardous materials would remain in campus buildings and would not be remediated under the No Project Alternative.

Neither the Master Plan nor the No Project Alternative would result in significant drainage impacts.

No unavoidable significant adverse land use impacts would occur under the Master Plan and the No Project Alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would not include new academic buildings that may exceed the height limits prescribed by the city of Los Angeles' zoning code.

The significant but mitigable impacts of construction noise on campus academic facilities under the Master Plan would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

Neither the proposed Master Plan nor the No Project Alternative would result in significant environmental impacts due to increases in population or housing demand.

No unavoidable significant adverse impacts to public services would occur under the No Project Alternative or the proposed Master Plan. The potentially significant but mitigable construction air quality and noise impacts on Grant High School and College academic facilities would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

Due to increases in enrollment and employment anticipated under the Master Plan and the resulting increases in traffic, significant impacts would occur at 10 of the 40 study intersections in the year 2010. With implementation of proposed mitigation measures, impacts at all 10 of the affected intersections would be reduced to less than significant levels. It is expected that enrollment at Valley College would continue to increase in future years under the No Project Alternative, although that increase might not be as large as that anticipated under the Master Plan due to constraints posed by existing campus facilities. Thus, increases in traffic would occur under both the No Project Alternative and Master Plan, but the traffic impacts would likely be less under the No Project Alternative.

The increases in utility consumption or generation under the Master Plan would be greater than would occur under the No Project Alternative though neither alternative would result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts on utilities or service providers. However, it should be noted that proposed Master Plan projects would follow green, energy efficient, sustainable design guidelines as set forth in the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Guidelines. Following such practices would reduce the amount of electricity consumed by the College. Thus, development of new buildings and renovation of existing buildings under the Master Plan is likely to result in greater energy savings than would occur under the No Project Alternative.

Although the No Project Alternative would not result in many of the impacts that could occur under the Master Plan, it would not fulfill the project objectives identified above. Under the No Project Alternative, improvements would be limited and consequently the needs of the College, students, and community would not be met. Buildings that are functionally obsolete, energy inefficient, fail to meet current codes and standards, and are unable to accommodate changing technologies in teaching and education, would remain. New state-of-the art academic and athletic facilities would not be constructed.

4-3 ALTERNATIVE ENROLLMENT GROWTH SCENARIO

Impacts due to implementation of the Master Plan would result from the construction and operation of new facilities in addition to projected increases in student enrollment and employment (e.g., more students and employees commuting to and from the College would result in increased traffic congestion). For the purposes of the analyses in this EIR, it was assumed that under the Master Plan, student enrollment would increase by an average of 3 percent per year compounded annually, resulting in a total enrollment of approximately 23,000 students or 15,693 FTE students in the 2008-2009 academic year. Total enrollment at Valley College in the fall 2001 semester was 18,487 students. For the 2001-2002 academic year, there were 14,154 FTE students enrolled at the College. There were an estimated 19,309 students enrolled in the fall 2002 semester and the estimated number of FTE students for the 2002-2003 academic year is 13,393. However, given decreased state revenues and budget shortfalls due to the sliding economy, the per-student funding received by the state's community colleges "is not keeping up or reflecting the system's needs."¹ As a consequence, the state's community colleges will not be able to accommodate the enrollment growth previously anticipated. Accordingly, an alternative scenario has been defined for this EIR based on the assumption that enrollment would increase by an average annual rate of 2 percent per year resulting in a total enrollment in 2008 of approximately 21,700 students, or approximately 94 percent of the enrollment of 23,000 students anticipated under the Master Plan. There would also be fewer College employees under this alternative. For this analysis, it is assumed that the improvements (i.e., new facilities, renovation projects, and public/private partnerships) proposed under the Master Plan would still occur under this alternative scenario.

¹ www.cccco.edu/events/ccc_day/ccc_day_message.htm, June, 2002.

❑ Visual Resources

The visual impacts of this alternative would be identical to those of the Master Plan. No unavoidable significant adverse visual impacts would occur under either this alternative or the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Air Quality

Under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan, emissions of nitrogen oxides after implementation of proposed mitigation measures would likely exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District significance thresholds for both the peak construction day and quarter. Additionally, particulate matter (PM₁₀) emissions would be significant for both the peak construction day and quarter for both alternatives. Operational air quality impacts due to additional motor vehicle trips would likely be significant both under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan; however, this alternative would generate fewer pollutant emissions than the Master Plan because there would be fewer students and employees traveling to and from school.

❑ Historical Resources

Both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan would result in the demolition of the existing Cafeteria, Library, Physics, and Chemistry Buildings, which could have an adverse effect on historical resources. Although these buildings do not possess transcendent importance as individual architectural/historical resources, they are important contributing components to a grouping of early permanent campus buildings (1955-1959) that are strongly associated with one another due to their shared architectural design, footprints, and site-plan placements. However, because the proposed new buildings will be designed in conformance with the District's *Design Criteria and Standards*, they would be compatible with the architectural style, details, and scale of the adjacent existing buildings. Construction of the new Student Services and Library Buildings would not result in a substantial adverse modification to the attractive spatial and landscape relationships found within Quadrangle area nor would the new buildings adversely affect the spatial relationships between buildings that characterize the original campus master plan.

❑ Archaeological Resources

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan is expected to result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources that may be present on the campus.

❑ Paleontological Resources

This alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in potentially significant but mitigable impacts to paleontological resources.

❑ Geology/Soils/Seismicity

The geologic and seismic impacts or hazards would be similar for both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. It is anticipated that all hazards and impacts can be mitigated to a level of insignificance through proper design and engineering and adherence to applicable building codes.

❑ Hazardous Materials

Renovation projects under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in exposure of asbestos-containing building materials and/or lead-based paint contaminants, a potentially significant but mitigable impact. New construction in areas where hazardous materials have been used or stored on campus could result in significant but mitigable impacts under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Hydrology and Water Quality

The impacts under this alternative would be similar to those that could occur under the proposed Master Plan. Under both alternatives, the amount of impervious surfaces would decrease slightly and Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction and design to reduce pollutants in runoff from new parking lots and other impervious surfaces.

❑ Land Use and Planning

No significant adverse land use impacts are anticipated under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan. However, both alternatives may require conditional use permits or variances from the city of Los Angeles for buildings that exceed the existing height limits under the zoning code.

❑ Noise

Construction noise impacts on campus academic facilities and Grant High School are potentially significant but mitigable under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. Neither alternative would result in significant operational noise impacts, though the increases in traffic noise under this alternative would be incrementally less than would occur under the proposed Master Plan because there would be fewer students traveling in motor vehicles to and from school under this alternative.

❑ Population and Housing

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in significant increases in population or demand for housing that would result in significant impacts to the environment.

❑ Public Services

No significant impacts to public services, with the exception of potential construction noise and air quality impacts on Grant High School, would occur under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Transportation/Traffic and Parking

This alternative would result in less traffic than the Master Plan because of lower anticipated future student enrollment levels. Under the Master Plan, significant traffic impacts are expected to occur at 10 of the 40 study intersections in the year 2008. With implementation of proposed mitigation measures, impacts at the 10 significantly affected intersections would be reduced to a level of insignificance. Due to the lower enrollment and employee levels assumed under this alternative (approximately 94 percent of what would occur under the Master Plan), there would be fewer intersections significantly affected by this alternative.

❑ Public Utilities

The increases in utility consumption or generation would be slightly less than those that could occur under the Master Plan though neither alternative would result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts on utilities or service providers. Development under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan would follow green, energy efficient, sustainable design guidelines as set forth in the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Guidelines. Following such practices would reduce the amount of electricity consumed by the College.

4-4 PROPOSITION A ALTERNATIVE

This alternative would consist of only the Master Plan projects for which there is Proposition A funding. Thus, under this alternative, all of the projects proposed under the Master Plan would be constructed, with the exception of the new Computer-Business-Technology Center, the new Student Services Building, the new Child Development Center, and the Fire/Life/Safety Training Tower. Also, under this alternative, the Motion Picture Building would not be renovated.

❑ Visual Resources

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in unavoidable significant adverse visual impacts. However, this alternative would not result in demolition of the existing Library, Physics, and Chemistry Buildings. As noted above, these buildings are important contributing components to a grouping of early permanent campus buildings (1955-1959) that are strongly associated with one another due to their shared architectural design, footprints, and site-plan placements.

❑ Air Quality

Under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan, emissions of nitrogen oxides after implementation of proposed mitigation measures would likely exceed South Coast Air Quality

Management District significance thresholds for both the peak construction day and quarter. Also, it is expected that particulate matter emissions on the peak day, after mitigation, would still be significant for both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. Operational air quality impacts would be significant under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Historical Resources

This alternative would not result in demolition of the existing Library, Physics, and Chemistry Buildings. These buildings are important contributing components to a grouping of early permanent campus buildings (1955-1959) that are strongly associated with one another due to their shared architectural design, footprints, and site-plan placements. However, because the proposed new buildings under the Master Plan will be designed in conformance with the District's *Design Criteria and Standards*, they would be compatible with the architectural style, details, and scale of the adjacent existing buildings. Therefore, neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in unavoidable significant adverse historic impacts.

❑ Archaeological Resources

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan is expected to result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources that may be present on the campus.

❑ Paleontological Resources

This alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in potentially significant but mitigable impacts to paleontological resources.

❑ Geology/Soils/Seismicity

The geologic and seismic impacts or hazards would be similar for both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. It is anticipated that all hazards and impacts can be mitigated to a level of insignificance through proper design and engineering and adherence to applicable building codes.

❑ Hazardous Materials

Renovation projects under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in exposure of asbestos-containing building materials and/or lead-based paint contaminants, a potentially significant but mitigable impact. New construction in areas where hazardous materials have been used or stored on campus could result in significant but mitigable impacts under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Hydrology and Water Quality

The impacts under this alternative would be similar to those that could occur under the proposed Master Plan. Under both alternatives, the amount of impervious surfaces would decrease slightly and Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction and design to reduce pollutants in runoff from new parking lots and other impervious surfaces.

❑ Land Use and Planning

No significant adverse land use impacts are anticipated under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan. However, this alternative and the proposed Master Plan may require conditional use permits or variances from the city of Los Angeles for buildings that exceed the existing height limits under the zoning code.

❑ Noise

Construction noise impacts on campus academic facilities could be potentially significant but mitigable under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. Neither alternative would result in significant operational noise impacts.

❑ Population and Housing

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in significant increases in population or demand for housing that would result in significant impacts to the environment.

❑ Public Services

No significant impacts to public services, with the exception of potential construction noise and air quality impacts on Grant High School, would occur under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Transportation/Traffic and Parking

Under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan, significant traffic impacts are expected to occur at 10 of the 40 study intersections in the year 2008. With implementation of proposed mitigation measures, impacts at the 10 significantly affected intersections would be reduced to a level of insignificance.

❑ Public Utilities

The increases in utility consumption or generation would be similar to those that could occur under the Master Plan though neither alternative would result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts on utilities or service providers. Development under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan would follow green, energy efficient, sustainable design guidelines as set forth in the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Guidelines. Following such practices would reduce the amount of electricity consumed by the College.

[Note: Subsequent to release of the Draft EIR for public review and comment, additional studies were conducted to determine the feasibility of constructing the new Library/Learning Resource Center on the site of the existing Cafeteria Building. As a result of those studies, it was determined that demolition of the existing Cafeteria Building and construction of new Library/Learning Resource Center on the Cafeteria site and construction of a new Student Services Center on the site of the existing Library would best meet the Master Plan objectives and fulfill the College's academic and program needs. Placing the new Library on the site of the existing Cafeteria would also avoid the significant visual and historic impacts that would occur if the Library were constructed in the open green space at the south end of the Quadrangle.]

4-5 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally superior alternative would be the No Project Alternative because of the absence of significant environmental impacts. However, as discussed above, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill any of the project objectives. Under the No Project Alternative, improvements would be limited and consequently the needs of the College, students, and community would not be met. Facilities that could support anticipated future enrollment levels would not be provided. Landscaping and other improvements, including new structures that would enhance the appearance of the College, would be limited or would not be provided. Other environmental benefits of the proposed Master Plan, including improvements in water quality due to new stormwater treatment facilities, internal campus pedestrian and vehicular circulation improvements, and decreased energy consumption, would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

Specifically, under the No Project Alternative, the College's ability to meet the following project objectives would be constrained.

- To provide the appropriate facilities to meet Valley College's commitment to the communities it serves, including daytime and evening students and the neighborhood community, by expanding and improving its educational and athletic facilities and community-oriented programs.
- To design new facilities to meet the needs of current and future students and current and future curriculum and teaching methodologies. Current curriculum will continue to provide students with the skills needed to be successful in their chosen fields, but new facilities must be designed to meet the future of educational technology and educational needs of a global economy.

- To develop and plan for the infrastructure required for state-of-the-art educational facilities designed to expand to accommodate changing technologies, including both new methods of teaching and educating students, as well as the equipment to support that effort.
- To create a more aesthetic, active and productive Valley College: educationally, economically, and in relationship to the community.
- To create a more harmonious and vibrant sense of place that defines Valley College as a unique and valued asset to the educational community and the San Fernando community.
- To create a revitalized Valley College presence that builds upon its special physical characteristics, recognizing the existing architectural and landscape features that are to be enhanced by new buildings, the development of exterior space, and new landscaping and site features.
- To create and design facilities and site improvements that promote the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEEDTM) Green Building standards.

According to the *State CEQA Guidelines*, if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR shall identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. The Proposition A Alternative would be the marginally environmentally superior build alternative because it would result in fewer construction impacts and would avoid the adverse, but less than significant visual and historic impacts due to demolition of the existing Library, Physics, and Chemistry Buildings. However, this alternative would not provide all of the new facilities needed to meet the College's academic and program needs and to accommodate anticipated future enrollment levels. Under this alternative, several buildings proposed for demolition, which do not meet current building codes, are not energy efficient, and are functionally and programmatically obsolete, would remain. Therefore, this alternative would not provide all of the benefits of the proposed Master Plan and would not fulfill the project objectives to the same extent as the proposed Master Plan.

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