

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

This Environmental Impact Report (EIR) has been prepared by the Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) to evaluate potential environmental effects that would result from development of the proposed Jordan High School Major Renovation Project (proposed project). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA) statutes (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. seq., as amended) and implementing guidelines (California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 15000, et. seq., 2013). The LBUSD is the lead agency under CEQA.

The LBUSD is proposing to renovate and modernize the existing David Starr Jordan (Jordan) High School campus, located in the City of Long Beach. The campus currently includes students from 9th through 12th grades, which are housed within 18 permanent buildings and 32 portable classrooms. The 26.9-acre project site currently consists of approximately 332,583 square feet of permanent building space and an additional approximately 30,720 square feet of portable structures (approximately 363,303 total square feet). The existing permanent buildings were constructed in the 1930s and 1940s, with some additions completed in the 1950s through the 1990s. The existing high school campus is outdated and many classrooms do not meet the current needs of students.

The proposed project would include implementation of the proposed campus master plan in approximately six phases starting in January 2014, with the full buildout being completed over several years as funding becomes available. To implement the campus master plan, the proposed project would include demolition of approximately 10 permanent buildings and 32 portable buildings, renovation of approximately 213,000 square feet of existing building space, and construction of approximately 240,000 square feet of new building space.

At full buildout, the project site would consist of approximately 453,000 square feet of total building space. The proposed project would result in a net increase of approximately 89,697 square feet of building space. As of the 2012-2013 school year, the student enrollment at Jordan High School was 3,604. No change in student enrollment is anticipated with the implementation of the proposed project. The existing student capacity of the school is 3,930. At project buildout, the total capacity of the school would be 3,870 students. Although the overall square footage on campus would increase, the additional square footage would account for laboratories and other ancillary facilities. Land uses on the project site would not change and the proposed project would not result in an expansion of uses. All phases of the proposed project would be contained within the existing boundaries of the Jordan High School campus.

1.2 THE CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

CEQA requires preparation of an EIR when there is substantial evidence supporting a fair argument that a proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment. The purpose of an EIR is to provide decision makers, public agencies, and the general public with an objective and informational document that fully discloses the environmental effects of the proposed project. The EIR process is intended to

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facilitate the objective evaluation of potentially significant direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project, and to identify feasible mitigation measures and alternatives that would reduce or avoid the proposed project's significant effects. In addition, CEQA specifically requires that an EIR identify those adverse impacts determined to be unavoidably significant even after all feasible mitigation is employed. CEQA applies to proposed projects initiated by, funded by, or requiring discretionary approvals from state or local government agencies. The proposed project constitutes a project as defined by CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.). CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 states that a "Lead Agency" is "the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project." Therefore, the LBUSD is the lead agency responsible for compliance with CEQA for the proposed project.

As lead agency for the proposed project, the LBUSD must complete an environmental review to determine if implementation of the proposed project would result in significant adverse environmental impacts. To fulfill the purpose of CEQA, an Initial Study was prepared to assist in making that determination, and was circulated for a 30-day public review period from July 23, 2013 through August 21, 2013. The Notice of Preparation (NOP) was mailed to all property owners and occupants within a 300-foot radius of the project site. This included a total of 1,041 mailings to surrounding residential, commercial, and other properties. The Initial Study and NOP were also mailed to 19 state, regional, and local agencies, organizations and stakeholders. In addition, the documents were made available for the public to review at the LBUSD office and three local libraries, as well as on the LBUSD website. The NOP was circulated in the Press Telegram newspaper on July 23, 2013. No public scoping meeting was held during the public review period.

Based on the nature and scope of the proposed project and the evaluation contained in the Initial Study environmental checklist (Appendix A), the LBUSD, as the lead agency, concluded that an EIR is the proper level of environmental documentation for this project. This EIR focuses on the environmental impacts identified as potentially significant during the Initial Study process, including the comments received in response to the NOP. The comments received in response to the NOP are located in Appendix A of this EIR. The issue areas analyzed in detail in this EIR include aesthetics, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, noise, and transportation and traffic. Effects not found to be significant are addressed in Chapter 4.0, Impact Overview of this EIR.

This Draft EIR is being circulated for 45 days for public review and comment. The timeframe of the public review period is identified in the Notice of Availability. During this period, comments from the general public, organizations, and agencies regarding environmental issues analyzed in the Draft EIR and the Draft EIR's accuracy and completeness may be submitted to the lead agency at the following address:

Tom Rizzuti
Long Beach Unified School District
2425 Webster Avenue
Long Beach, California 90810
Fax: (562) 595-8644
E-mail: facilitiesmail@lbschools.net

The LBUSD will prepare written responses to all comments pertaining to environmental issues raised on the Draft EIR if they are submitted in writing and received by the last day of the public review period identified in the Notice of Availability. A public meeting will be held during the Draft EIR public review period. Details regarding the date, time, and location of the public meeting are identified in the Notice of Availability.

Prior to approval of the proposed project, the LBUSD, as the lead agency and decision making entity, is required to certify that this EIR has been completed in accordance with CEQA, that the proposed project has been reviewed and the information in this EIR has been considered, and that this EIR reflects the independent judgment of the LBUSD Board of Education. CEQA also requires the LBUSD to adopt “findings” with respect to each significant environmental effect identified in the EIR (California Public Resources Code Section 21081; CEQA Guidelines Section 15091). For each significant effect, CEQA requires the approving agency to make one or more of the following findings:

- Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project that mitigate or avoid the significant effects on the environment.
- Those changes or alterations are within the responsibility and jurisdiction of another public agency and have been, or can and should be, adopted by that other agency.
- Specific economic, legal, social, technological, or other considerations, including considerations for the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the mitigation measures or alternatives identified in the environmental impact report.

If the LBUSD concludes that the proposed project will result in significant effects that cannot be substantially lessened or avoided by feasible mitigation measures and alternatives, the LBUSD will also adopt a “statement of overriding considerations” prior to approval of the proposed project (California Public Resources Code Section 21081 (b); CEQA Guidelines Section 15093). Such statements are intended under CEQA to provide a written means by which the lead agency balances in writing the benefits of the proposed project and the significant and unavoidable environmental impacts. Where the lead agency concludes that the economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits outweigh the unavoidable environmental impacts, the lead agency may find such impacts “acceptable” and approve the proposed project.

In addition, public agencies, when approving a project, must also adopt a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program describing the changes that were incorporated into the proposed project or made a condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment (California Public Resources Code Section 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines Section 15097). The Mitigation

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Monitoring and Reporting Program is adopted at the time of project approval and is designed to ensure compliance during project implementation. Upon approval of the proposed project, the LBUSD will be responsible for implementation of the proposed project's Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

1.3 ORGANIZATION OF THE EIR

This EIR is organized as follows:

The Executive Summary provides an overview of the information provided in detail in subsequent chapters. It consists of an introduction; a description of the proposed project and alternatives considered; a discussion of areas of controversy and issues to be resolved; and a table that summarizes the potential environmental impacts in each category, the significance determination for those impacts, mitigation measures, and significance after mitigation.

Chapter 1.0 Introduction provides a brief description of the proposed project. It includes a brief overview of the CEQA environmental review process and a section describing the organization of the EIR.

Chapter 2.0 Project Description provides a detailed description of the proposed project. Project objectives are identified, and information on the proposed project characteristics and construction scenario is provided. This chapter also includes a description of the intended uses of the EIR and public agency actions.

Chapter 3.0 Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation describes the potential environmental effects of implementing the proposed project. The discussion in Chapter 3.0 is organized by five environmental issue areas, as follows:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic

For each environmental issue, the analysis and discussion are organized into five subsections as described below:

Environmental Setting - This subsection describes, from a local and regional perspective, the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the proposed project at the time of publication of the NOP or actually experienced in past years. The environmental setting establishes the baseline conditions by which the LBUSD will determine whether specific project-related impacts are significant or cumulatively considerable.

Significance Criteria - This subsection identifies a set of thresholds by which the level of a significant impact is determined.

Environmental Impacts - This subsection provides detailed information on the environmental effects of the proposed project, and whether the impacts of the proposed project would meet or exceed the established significance criteria.

Mitigation Measures - This subsection identifies mitigation measures that would avoid or substantially reduce significant adverse project-related impacts and evaluates whether such are feasible.

Level of Significance after Mitigation - This subsection indicates whether project-related impacts would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of the mitigation measures identified in the EIR. This subsection also identifies any residual significant and unavoidable adverse effects of the proposed project that would result even after the mitigation measures have been implemented.

Chapter 4.0 Impact Overview presents the other mandatory CEQA discussions, including the following:

Unavoidable Significant Impacts - This subsection identifies and summarizes the unavoidable significant impacts described in detail in Chapter 3.0.

Effects Not Found to Be Significant - This subsection identifies and summarizes the issue areas that were determined to have no adverse environmental impact or have a less than significant environmental impact given the established significance criteria.

Cumulative Impacts - This subsection addresses the potentially significant cumulative impacts that may result from the proposed project when taking into account related or cumulative impacts resulting from other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

Irreversible Environmental Changes - This subsection addresses the extent to which the proposed project would consume nonrenewable resources.

Growth-Inducing Impacts - This subsection describes the potential of the proposed project to induce economic or population growth or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment.

Chapter 5.0 Alternatives describes and evaluates the comparative merits of a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed project that would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the proposed project and avoid or substantially lessen potentially significant project-related impacts. Chapter 5.0 also describes the preliminary site constraints analysis and rationale for selecting the range of alternatives discussed in the EIR and identifies the alternatives considered by the LBUSD that were rejected from further discussion as infeasible during the scoping process. Additionally, Chapter 5.0 includes a discussion of the environmental effects of the No Project Alternative.

Chapter 6.0 Acronyms and Abbreviations provides a list of acronyms and abbreviations used in this EIR.

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Chapter 7.0 References provides a list of sources used in the preparation of the EIR. Footnote references are also provided in each chapter.

Chapter 8.0 List of Preparers identifies those persons responsible for the preparation of this EIR.