A. ABSTRACT

CEQA Lead Agency: Los Angeles Community College District (District)
770 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90017

Applicant: Los Angeles Mission College (LAMC)
13356 Eldridge Avenue
Sylmar, CA 91342-3245

Responsible Agencies: California Department of Fish and Game, Southern California Association of Governments, South Coast Air Quality Management District, Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and the City of Los Angeles.

PROJECT LOCATION

The 2009 Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan would be located on three sites: Main LAMC Campus: (13356 Eldridge Avenue, Sylmar, CA 91342-3245), East Campus: Corner of Harding Street and Maclay Street; and Hubbard Street Nursery Site: portion of block west of the LAMC Main Campus, on Hubbard Street between Lexicon Avenue and Eldridge Avenue. (Please refer to Figure 1, Regional Location Map, and Figure 2, Vicinity Map.)

PROJECT NEED

The LAMC Master Plan sets forth the broad goal to update aging buildings and expand educational and support facilities at the LAMC to accommodate a projected increase in students while preserving the suburban atmosphere of the college campus. The following objectives have been identified in support of the project goal:

- The primary objective is to create a high-quality, innovative, and attractive physical college environment to promote academic excellence and service in the Mission College community, region, and state for a projected enrollment of 15,000 students. Leading-edge facilities, including buildings, classrooms, and laboratories, will support a strong comprehensive academic setting, provide technology opportunities, and encourage workforce development, making Mission College a premier learning environment.
- Maximize the educational benefits of available public funds, including Propositions A, AA, and J, by efficiently developing new educational facilities and improving and reinforcing existing structures at LAMC.
- Organize and develop land-use activities within the campus to strengthen academic, cultural, and social interaction, and to create a strong sense of place that supports the academic and social life of the college.
- Maintain flexibility in the use of spaces and buildings, and design for future growth and expansion to keep pace with the growing population in the Sylmar and northeastern San Fernando Valley area by providing local facilities that are capable of delivering quality higher education and technical training to a projected enrollment of 15,000 students.

- To the extent practicable, design and locate buildings and facilities consistent with the policies, goals, and objectives of the City of Los Angeles General Plan and the Sylmar Community Plan; implement a site layout and architectural design that is compatible with adjacent land uses and the existing community character; and preserve, enhance, and restore the natural environment at the campus.

- Maximize the use of available vacant and underutilized lands proximate to the LAMC campus to accommodate the development of educational opportunities available to the public.

- Strengthen physical connections and campus activities that serve the surrounding community and promote academic excellence, technical aptitude, and job growth by providing a comprehensive college experience, diverse educational programs, and superior campus facilities available to all Sylmar and northeastern San Fernando Valley area residents.

LAMC has several additional needs that would be fulfilled by development of the Athletic Fields Complex on the East Campus.

- LAMC’s growing health, fitness, and athletic programs have a critical unmet need for outdoor fields for educational purposes and sports competition for its students.

- LAMC needs dedicated athletic fields for student athletes and competitive sports programming.

- LAMC’s continuing enrollment growth and expansion of educational program offerings command the need for outdoor athletic facilities and open spaces for instruction, as well as athletic competition.

- Students and community members who utilize the Health, Fitness, and Athletics Complex, adjacent to the athletic fields would be greatly served by complementary, open, outdoor green spaces near the building.

- LACCD owns property adjacent to the north of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), property that would be consolidated and developed with athletic fields in collaboration with the ACOE property.

- Development of the property would provide safe and direct access for students and the community traveling between LAMC educational buildings and the athletic fields on both the ACOE property and LACCD property.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) approved the 2007 Los Angeles Mission College Facilities Master Plan (2007 Master Plan) to guide the orderly development of instructional and support facilities at LAMC, as enrollment is expected to increase through 2015. The 2007 Master Plan approved a total of 555,000 gross square feet (gsf) of instructional and support facilities to be located on the Main Campus and on newly acquired property, referred to as East Campus, in order for the College to serve the anticipated enrollment growth. According to the previously approved 2007 Master Plan, the student population at LAMC is projected to grow to 15,000 students by the year 2015. In 2009, there are over 9,500 students attending Mission College.

Proposed 2009 LAMC Facilities Master Plan

Los Angeles Mission College is proposing revisions to the 2007 Master Plan to accommodate LAMC academic programming, and to facilitate the construction of new buildings and newly planned facilities. The proposed 2009 LAMC Facilities Master Plan (2009 Master Plan) would complete previously approved facilities at the Main Campus and the East Campus, provide pedestrian and streetscape enhancements along Eldridge Avenue between these campuses, and incorporate two new development areas on the East Campus and on the Hubbard Street Nursery site (see Figure 2, Vicinity Map).

Main Campus

Mission College proposes that the 2009 Master Plan continue to develop the college as a preeminent community college and community cultural center in the Northeast San Fernando Valley (see Figure 3, New Development and Improvement Areas). As part of the 2009 Master Plan, building improvements and additions on the Main Campus would be completed in substantial conformity with the 2007 Master Plan. As new buildings are constructed, available open space to locate temporary facilities has diminished. Therefore, temporary facilities would be constructed on a new development area on Hubbard Street on the Nursery site as described below.

Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements

The pedestrian pathway along the south side of the El Cariso Golf Course, spanning the Main Campus and the newly developed East Campus, needs to be improved to create a pedestrian-friendly connection for students and faculty to transition between the two locations. This pathway is not safe for pedestrians: the existing sidewalk is cracked and raised by tree uprooting; it is not well lit, and at times is under-used, causing personal safety concerns. The distance between the parking structure on the Main Campus and the Health, Fitness, & Athletics Complex is approximately 1/3 of a mile. There are no bike paths or intermediate rest areas between the two campus locations. It is the intent of LAMC to revitalize this pathway with an attractive and functional streetscape, making the distance not only safer for its users but also enjoyable. This improvement will become particularly important when the Health, Fitness, & Athletics Complex opens and students use this pathway to commute between the Main Campus and the East Campus. The improved streetscape would eventually connect south of the Main Campus along Eldridge Avenue to Hubbard Street.
LAMC proposes to improve this pathway by re-paving the sidewalk, alleviating future tree uprooting problems, incorporating a sidewalk bike lane, providing resting areas with seating, and designating crosswalks (see Figure 4, Eldridge Avenue Streetscape Improvements). Improvements would include landscaped street medians and narrowed driving lanes, to slow the speed of traffic along Eldridge Avenue.

**East Campus**
The area south of the intersection of Maclay and Harding Street would be completed to substantially conform to the 2007 Master Plan. One building from the main campus has been relocated to the East Campus. In addition, due to high costs, the proposed underground parking structure will not be developed and a surface parking lot will be used instead. Also, the extension of Eldridge Avenue through to Maclay Street is no longer proposed. Instead Harding Street will be used to connect Eldridge Ave and Maclay Street.

**LAMC Athletic Fields Complex**
With LAMC's continuing expansion of health and fitness programs, the College has experienced an increasing need for outdoor athletic facilities and open spaces for instruction and athletic competition. To satisfy this need, LAMC proposes to develop athletic fields on the East Campus on two parcels of land north of the Harding Street intersection at Maclay Street. The northern parcel, at approximately 6.4 acres, is owned by LACCD; while the southern 8.2-acre parcel is owned by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). The College proposes to enter into a long-term lease (25 years plus 25-year renewal) with the ACOE for the purpose of developing athletic fields at this site.

To further enhance the Health, Fitness, & Athletics Complex, the proposed 2009 Master Plan includes the development of the following National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) competition athletic fields (see Figure 5, LAMC Athletic Fields Complex):

- Men's Baseball Field
- Women's Softball Field
- A Soccer Field to be shared for men’s and women’s soccer

These athletic fields would be conveniently located just north of the Health, Fitness, & Athletics Complex and would provide safe and direct access between the Athletic Fields and the College’s educational buildings on the southern portion of the East Campus.

Planned site amenities include concession stands, restrooms, press boxes, batting cages, bull pens, a walking path, and par course. The site would also have two surface parking lots with solar panel canopies that support the College's efforts of not only being an energy-efficient campus but also an environmentally friendly campus. One parking lot would serve the baseball field; the other would serve both the softball and soccer fields.

Construction of the athletic fields is expected to begin in early 2010 and be completed in fall 2010.
Hubbard Street Nursery Site

The 2009 Master Plan proposes to expand the college onto the site of an existing landscape nursery on the west side of Hubbard Street, between Eldridge Avenue and Lexicon (see Figure 2, Vicinity Map, and Figure 6, Nursery Property – Hubbard Street). This parcel is just over an acre in size. In the short term, the nursery property would be used to provide temporary space (swing space) for departments and functions that are being displaced by the build-out of the current 2007 Master Plan on the Main Campus. For example, several bungalows currently situated on the Main Campus would relocate to this nursery property and limited parking would be provided to allow for the construction of a new Student Services and Administration Building at the northeast corner of the intersection of Eldridge Avenue and Pasha Street. It is expected to take approximately six months to build out any temporary swing space on the nursery property.

In the long term, the nursery site would be developed to complement the current campus and community extension programs on the Main Campus. LAMC plans to develop the nursery site with attractive fencing and landscaping to reduce obtrusiveness of neighboring residences. Construction of the initial phase of development would begin soon after LAMC has acquired the nursery property. The timing of long term development on the nursery site is not established at this time.

Future Developments

LAMC may have needs in the future that are not determined at this time and are not covered under the 2009 Master Plan. For example, LAMC may have needs for offsite college facilities for activities such as neighborhood classrooms, training sessions, and vocational centers, and LAMC may need to acquire properties not addressed in the 2009 Master Plan for these purposes. Such future projects would be subject to separate CEQA review.
CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA)

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA), as amended, an Initial Study (IS) for the proposed project has been conducted to identify potential significant environmental effects of the development and operation of the 2009 Master Plan which need to be further analyzed in a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (Subsequent EIR) and also identify effects that are not found to be potentially significant.

Effects Found to be Potentially Significant
The 2009 Master Plan is examined in this IS to identify potential effects on the environment (refer to attached Environmental Checklist). Both project-specific and cumulative impacts have been determined to be potentially significant and will be analyzed in a Subsequent EIR. The Subsequent EIR will provide a detailed assessment of the effects identified as potentially significant in this IS and through the Subsequent EIR scoping process, and, where feasible, will identify ways to mitigate these impacts.

Effects Not Found to be Potentially Significant
The following potential impacts were determined either to be less than significant or not occur as a result of the project. These issues require no further environmental analysis and will not be carried forward to the Subsequent EIR:

Agriculture
Population and Housing

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the preliminary environmental analysis in this IS, future development and operations pursuant to the 2009 Master Plan has the potential to result in significant effects on the environment. The District finds that a Subsequent EIR is the appropriate environmental document, per the requirements of CEQA and the state CEQA Guidelines.

DOCUMENT PREPARATION

This IS was prepared by URS Corporation (URS) on behalf of LAMC.