

1.0 Introduction and Purpose





1.0 INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes (City) is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and has determined that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is required for the Marymount College Facilities Expansion Project (State Clearinghouse No. 2002021127). This EIR has been prepared in conformance with CEQA (California Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.); *CEQA Guidelines* (California Code of Regulations [CCR], Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.); and the rules, regulations and procedures for implementation of CEQA, as adopted by the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. The principal *CEQA Guidelines* sections governing content of this document are Sections 15120 through 15132 (Contents of Environmental Impact Reports) and Section 15161 (Project EIR).

The purpose of this EIR is to review the existing conditions, analyze potential environmental impacts and identify feasible mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant effects of the proposed Marymount College Facilities Expansion Project (“Project”), located at 30800 Palos Verdes Drive East in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. For more detailed information regarding the proposal, refer to Section 3.0, Project Description.

This EIR has been prepared as a Project EIR, addressing the environmental effects of the Project, in accordance with Section 15161 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. In accordance with Section 15121 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, the main purposes of this EIR are to:

- Provide decision-makers and the public with specific information regarding the environmental effects associated with the proposed project;
- Identify ways to minimize the significant effects of the project; and
- Describe reasonable alternatives to the project.

Mitigation measures are provided that may be adopted as conditions of approval to minimize the significance of impacts resulting from the Project. In addition, this EIR will be the primary reference document in the formulation and implementation of a mitigation-monitoring program for the proposed Project.

The City (which has the principal responsibility of processing and approving the Project) and other public (i.e., responsible and trustee) agencies that may use this EIR in the decision-making or permit process will consider the information in this EIR, along with other information that may be presented during the CEQA process. Environmental impacts are not always mitigatable to a level considered less than significant; in those cases, impacts are considered significant unavoidable impacts. In accordance with Section 15093(b) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, if a public agency approves a project that has significant impacts that are not substantially mitigated (i.e., significant unavoidable impacts), the agency shall state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is termed, per Section 15093 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, a “statement of overriding considerations.”



This document analyzes the environmental effects of the Project to the degree of specificity appropriate to the current proposed actions, as required by Section 15146 of the *CEQA Guidelines*. The analysis considers the activities associated with the Project to determine the short-term and long-term effects associated with their implementation. This EIR discusses both the direct and indirect impacts of this Project, as well as the cumulative impacts associated with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

1.2 COMPLIANCE WITH CEQA

PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT EIR

The Draft EIR is subject to a minimum 45-day review period by responsible and trustee agencies, the public and any interested parties. In the interest of providing the public ample opportunity to review and comment on the EIR, the City has elected to lengthen the standard review period from 45 days to 60 days. In accordance with the provisions of Sections 15085(a) and 15087(a)(1) of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, serving as the Lead Agency shall (1) publish a Notice of Availability (NOA) to the public of a Draft EIR; and (2) prepare and transmit a Notice of Completion (NOC) to the California State Clearinghouse. (Proof of publication is available at the offices of the Lead Agency.)

Any public agency or members of the public desiring to comment on the Draft EIR must submit their comments in writing to the lead agency at the address indicated on the document's NOC prior to the end of the public review period. The Lead Agency will evaluate and prepare responses to all relevant written comments received from both citizens and public agencies during the public review period.

FINAL EIR

The Final EIR will consist of the Draft EIR, revisions to the Draft EIR (if any) and responses to all written comments addressing concerns raised in the comments of responsible agencies, the public and any other reviewing parties. After the Final EIR is completed, and at least ten days prior to the certification hearing, a copy of the response to comments made by public agencies on the Draft EIR will be provided to those public agencies.

1.3 EIR SCOPING PROCESS

In compliance with the CEQA Guidelines, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes has maximized opportunities for the public to participate in the environmental review process. During preparation of the Draft EIR, efforts were made to contact various Federal, State, regional and local government agencies and other interested parties to solicit comments on the proposed Project. This included the following:

- Distribution of a Revised Initial Study and Notice of Preparation of an EIR on November 17, 2005;
- Public Scoping Meeting on December 13, 2005; and
- Public Scoping Meeting on January 10, 2006.



Additionally, the City Council and the Planning Commission held a voluntary pre-screening workshop on January 31, 2006 to provide the College with input on the proposed Project.

INITIAL STUDY

On July 12, 2000, the City received applications for Conditional Use Permit (CUP) No. 9 - Revision "D," Grading Permit No. 2231 and Variance No. 486 ("Applications") to consider amending an original CUP that allowed the operation of the Marymount College, as it had been amended through Revision "C." The Applications were filed in order to allow campus improvements referred to as the Marymount College Facilities Expansion Project. In accordance with Section 15063 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, the City undertook the preparation of an Initial Study (hereafter the "2002 Initial Study"). The 2002 Initial Study determined that an EIR should be prepared to address potential significant impacts of the Project. In response to geotechnical studies and input from City officials/staff, the community, and the College's architect and engineers, the College withdrew the original application on June 12, 2003.

On June 12, 2003, the same day the original application was withdrawn, the College submitted a new application for Zoning Case No. 2003-00317 (CUP No. 9 - Revision "E," a Grading Permit and a Variance Permit) to consider amending the original CUP in order to allow campus improvements. On May 25, 2005, the City received revised architectural plans. The application was deemed complete on August 21, 2005, with geology information pending. The pending geology information was subsequently submitted to the City and reviewed and accepted by the City Geologist on October 14, 2005. In accordance with Section 15063 of the *CEQA Guidelines*, as amended, the City again undertook the preparation of an Initial Study. The *Marymount College Facilities Expansion Project Initial Study (Initial Study)* concluded that several environmental issue areas could be impacted by construction and buildout of the Project. As a result, the Initial Study concluded that the Draft EIR should address the Project's significant impacts on the environment, as follows:

- Land Use and Relevant Planning (Section 5.1),
- Aesthetics/Light and Glare (Section 5.2),
- Traffic and Circulation (Section 5.3),
- Air Quality (Section 5.4),
- Noise (Section 5.5),
- Geology and Soils (Section 5.6),
- Hydrology and Water Quality (Section 5.7),
- Public Services and Utilities (Section 5.8), and
- Biological Resources (Section 5.9).

Based on the Initial Study, no impact or less than significant impacts upon agricultural resources, cultural resources, mineral resources, and population and housing are anticipated as a result of the proposed Project. Accordingly, these issues are addressed in Section 8.0, *Effects Found Not To Be Significant*.

This EIR focuses primarily on changes in the environment that would result from the proposed Project. This EIR identifies potential impacts resulting from the



construction and operation of the proposed Project and provides measures to mitigate potential significant impacts. Those impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels are identified as significant unavoidable impacts.

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Pursuant to the provisions of *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15082, as amended, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) to public agencies, special districts and members of the public requesting such notice for an extended 57-day period commencing November 17, 2005 and ending January 13, 2006. The purpose of the NOP was to formally convey that the City is preparing a Draft EIR for the Marymount College Facilities Expansion Project, and that, as Lead Agency, the City was soliciting input regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the EIR. The Initial Study was circulated with the NOP. The Initial Study, NOP and responses to the NOP are provided in Appendix 13.1, Initial Study/Notice of Preparation.

EARLY CONSULTATION (SCOPING)

During the NOP circulation period, the City of Rancho Palos Verdes advertised two public meetings. The meetings were held on December 13, 2005 and January 10, 2006 at the Fred Hesse Community Park and were intended to facilitate public input. The meetings were held with the specific intent of providing interested individuals, groups, public agencies and others, a forum to orally provide input to the Lead Agency in an effort to assist in further refining the intended scope and focus of the EIR, as described in the NOP and Initial Study.

NOP AND SCOPING RESULTS

The specific environmental concerns outlined below were raised by responses to the NOP for the Project. The numerical reference in parenthesis is the EIR section in which the analysis is provided.

- Blocking views of the Pacific Ocean and Catalina Island by the block wall and buildings (5.2);
- Amplification of construction and operational noise at surrounding residences, because of topography (5.5);
- Stationary noise impacts during daytime and nighttime hours from the proposed Residence Halls (5.5);
- Light and glare impacts from nighttime activity and vehicle headlights in parking areas (5.2);
- Air quality impacts from vehicle exhaust in parking areas (5.4);
- Slope stability impacts during construction (grading) and operation of the campus (5.6);
- Increased traffic volumes (5.3);
- Parking availability (5.3);
- Crime potential on campus and need for police supervision (5.8);
- Noise and traffic level increases from introduction of 24-hour use (i.e., Residence Halls) (5.3, 5.5);



- Population growth in immediate community (apartment density in single-family neighborhood) (6.0);
- Emergency access in the event Palos Verdes Drive East became inaccessible (5.3);
- Impacts to jurisdictional waters (5.9);
- Potential for mud or landslides (5.7);
- Potential for construction activities to trigger activation of dormant landslides (5.7);
- Traffic safety and accidents (5.3);
- Increased use of existing recreational facilities (5.8);
- Noise impacts from increased athletic activities (5.5);
- Noise from students congregating outdoors (5.5);
- Impacts to existing water supplies and pressures from increased demand (5.8);
- Land use compatibility impacts (5.1);
- Scale and aesthetic compatibility impacts (5.2); and
- Temporary parking during construction (5.3).

In addition to the environmental concerns listed above, the following environmental concerns were previously raised during the 2002 Initial Study and have been incorporated and addressed in this EIR:

- Consistency with General Plan (low-density living, lack of compatibility with residential area, student enrollment numbers) (5.1 and 5.2);
- Project's impact on conditional use status and enrollment cap (5.1);
- Use of landscaping/foliage for aesthetic and noise purposes (5.2 and 5.5);
- Traffic/parking impacts due to construction (5.3);
- Access entering and exiting the campus (5.3);
- Parking overflow to residential streets (walking paths leading to Ganado Dr. and Palos Verdes Drive East) (5.3);
- Service access for vendors, trash and fire department vehicles (5.5 and 5.8);
- Air quality (construction and operational) (5.4);
- Noise created by Project (construction and post-development living/activities) (5.5);
- Storm water runoff quantity and impacts (5.7);
- Increase in solid waste during construction and post-development (5.8);
- Consider Concerned Citizen's Coalition/Marymount Expansion (CCC/ME) alternative proposal (7.2);
- Impacts of project on biological resources/natural habitat (displacement of species onto nearby residences) (5.9); and
- Detailed Project information (hours, time-frame, visual representation of Project, etc.) (3.0).

1.4 FORMAT OF THE EIR

The Draft EIR is organized into 13 sections, as follows:

- Section 1.0, *Introduction and Purpose*, provides CEQA compliance information.



- Section 2.0, *Executive Summary*, provides a brief Project description, summary of the environmental impacts, lists mitigation measures proposed to minimize the significant impacts, and describes those impacts, which remain significant following mitigation.
- Section 3.0, *Project Description*, provides a detailed Project description indicating Project location, background and history, characteristics, phasing and objectives, as well as associated discretionary actions required.
- Section 4.0, *Basis for the Cumulative Analysis*, describes the approach and methodology for the cumulative analysis.
- Section 5.0, *Description of Environmental Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures*, contains a detailed environmental analysis of the existing conditions, Project impacts, recommended mitigation measures and unavoidable adverse impacts.
- Section 6.0, *Long-Term Implications of the Proposed Project*, discusses significant environmental changes that would be involved in the proposed action, should it be implemented, and discusses growth inducing impacts of the proposed Project.
- Section 7.0, *Alternatives to the Proposed Project*, describes a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project or to the location of the Project, which could feasibly attain the basic Project objectives.
- Section 8.0, *Effects Found Not to Be Significant*, provides an explanation of potential impacts, which have been determined not to be significant.
- Section 9.0, *Organizations and Persons Consulted*, identifies all Federal, State or local agencies, other organizations and individuals consulted.
- Section 10.0, *Bibliography*, identifies reference sources for the EIR.
- Section 11.0, *Mitigation Monitoring Program*, will be included in the Final EIR and will identify responsibilities for monitoring mitigation.
- Section 12.0, *Comments and Responses*, will be included in the Final EIR and will provide comments and responses pertaining to the Draft EIR.
- Section 13.0, *Appendices*, contains technical documentation for the Project.

1.5 RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

Certain Projects or actions undertaken by a Lead Agency require subsequent oversight, approvals or permits from other public agencies in order to be implemented. Such other agencies are referred to as *Responsible Agencies* and *Trustee Agencies*. Pursuant to *CEQA Guidelines* Sections 15381 and 15386, as amended, Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies are respectively defined as follows:



“Responsible Agency” means a public agency, which proposes to carry out or approve a project, for which a Lead Agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR or Negative Declaration. For the purposes of CEQA, the term “Responsible Agency” includes all public agencies other than the Lead Agency, which have discretionary approval power over the Project. (Section 15381)

“Trustee Agency” means a State agency having jurisdiction by law over natural resources affected by a project, which are held in trust for the people of the State of California. (Section 15386, part)

Responsible and Trustee Agencies and other entities in addition to the City of Rancho Palos Verdes (Lead Agency), which may use this EIR in their decision-making process or for informational purposes include, but may not be limited to, the following:

- California Regional Water Quality Control Board;
- County of Los Angeles Public Works;
- County of Los Angeles – Public Works Environmental Management;
- County Sanitation District of Los Angeles County;
- Los Angeles County Fire Department;
- Los Angeles County Health Department;
- Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department;
- Metropolitan Transit Authority;
- Palos Verdes Library District;
- Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District;
- South Coast Air Quality Management District;
- Southern California Association of Governments;
- State of California Department of Fish and Game;
- State of California Department of Transportation;
- State Water Resources Control Board;
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

1.6 INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE

Pertinent documents relating to this EIR have been cited in accordance with *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15150, which encourages incorporation by reference, as a means of reducing redundancy and length of environmental reports. The following documents, which are available for public review at the City of Rancho Palos Verdes, Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement located at 30940 Hawthorne Boulevard, are hereby incorporated by reference into this EIR. Information contained within these documents has been utilized for one or more sections of this EIR. A brief synopsis of the scope and content of these documents is provided below:



- City of Rancho Palos Verdes General Plan/Environmental Impact Report (June 26, 1975, as amended). The purpose of the *General Plan* is to provide a general, comprehensive and long-range guide for community decision-making. As such, it reflects the community's goals. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes *General Plan* is organized into non-traditional elements, based on the integration of their functional relationships. These elements include the following:
 - Natural Environment Element;
 - Socio/Cultural Element;
 - Urban Environment Element;
 - Land Use Plan; and
 - Revised Housing Element.

Background information and policy information from the *General Plan* is cited in several sections of the EIR.

- City of Rancho Palos Verdes General Plan Land Use Map (June 26, 1975, as amended). This map provides a graphic illustration of the locations of the land use designations in the City. This map was used to identify the land use designations for the Project site and surrounding land uses.
- City of Rancho Palos Verdes Municipal Code (1982, as amended). This Code consists of all the regulatory and penal ordinances and administrative ordinances of the City of Rancho Palos Verdes. It is the method the City uses to implement control of land uses, in accordance with General Plan goals and policies. The City of Rancho Palos Verdes Zoning Ordinance, Title 17 of the Municipal Code, identifies land uses permitted and prohibited according to the zoning category of particular parcels. The provisions and standards contained in this Code are cited in several sections of this EIR.
- City of Rancho Palos Verdes Zoning Map (June 17, 1986, as amended). This map provides a graphic illustration of the locations of the zoning districts in the City. This map was used to identify the zoning districts of the Project site and surrounding properties.