

April 10, 2009

Robert Dias, Executive Director
Facilities, Construction Management, Operations
San Jose/Evergreen Community College District
4750 San Felipe Road
San Jose, CA 95135-1599

**SUBJECT: DRAFT SUBSEQUENT EIR FOR THE SAN JOSE CITY COLLEGE
FACILITIES MASTER PLAN UPDATE 2021 PROJECT (OA09-004)**

Dear Mr. Dias:

The City of San Jose received a Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) from the San Jose/Evergreen Community College District for the San Jose City College Facilities Master Plan Update project for their campus located south of Hwy 280, bounded by Moorpark Avenue, Rexford Way, Kingman Avenue, Fruitvale Avenue, Laswell Avenue, S. Bascom Avenue and Leigh Avenue. The Update involves the reorganization of Campus facilities and the reconfiguration of Campus access and circulation from the prior plan.

The City of San Jose appreciates the opportunity to review and provide comments on the Draft SEIR.

I. Introduction

Page 2-39: Figure 2.1-3

This figure depicting the 2021 Master Plan should identify existing buildings to be demolished, the location of the proposed corporation yard, and clearly label proposed Parking Garages #1 and #2.

II. Project Setting

Page 3-3: Baseball Field Complex

Please clarify how the District decided to relocate the Baseball Field Complex to the location along Leigh Avenue, when the apparent intended use of the SEIR is to inform just such a decision. If the District initiated construction of the Baseball Field Complex without first complying with CEQA, that should be made clear in the SEIR, so the public can understand how and why the existing project setting has already been compromised by the significant impacts the SEIR associates with the Baseball Field Complex.

Page 3-9: Figure 3.2-1 Existing Campus

Per previous comment regarding Page 3-3, an explanation should be provided that the partially constructed Baseball Field Complex is the subject of the SEIR.

Pages 4-5, 4-6, 4-7: Parking Garage #2

The SEIR's discussion of Parking Garage #2 is unclear. The student enrollment addressed by the SEIR is 12,000 students, the SEIR's traffic analysis is based on 12,000 students, yet the SEIR attempts to evaluate Parking Garage #2, which the SEIR indicates would not be developed until enrollment approaches 15,000 students. As Parking Garage #2 is not needed for 12,000 students, why is it included in the SEIR?

Page 4-6 states Parking Garage #2 is part of Phase III, with uncertain funding, yet Page 4-7 states it is anticipated Phase III projects will be completed prior to 2021, which appears to indicate the College expects students enrollment to reach 15,000 students before 2021 and create parking demand necessitating Garage #2.

Page 4-6: Transparent Light Tower

The SEIR should explain the purpose behind the light tower and how it relates to the college's educational mission. The light generated from the tower should be evaluated for consistency with the City's Outdoor Lighting Policy available at <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/counter/policies/> and for potential conflict with the research activities of the Lick Observatory. The energy usage associated with the light tower should be disclosed and evaluated in the SEIR.

III. Air Quality

Page 5-29: Student enrollment to 12,000

The discussion indicates enrollment will increase to 12,000 by 2021, yet the discussion also mentions the second parking garage that would be needed for enrollment reaching 15,000, and states the second garage is anticipated to be built by 2021. Does the college anticipate enrollment of 12,000 or 15,000 by 2021? The enrollment is intrinsic to the college's traffic, air quality and roadway noise impacts.

If the master plan includes construction of a second garage, and that garage would be needed at or above 15,000 students, the SEIR's air quality analysis must account for the vehicle emissions caused by the additional enrollment that triggers the second garage. The SEIR currently evaluates vehicle emissions resulting from 12,000 students, yet also attempts to evaluate construction of a garage intended for 3,000 more students.

Nitrogen Deposition

Atmospheric nitrogen deposition from vehicular emissions and stationary sources threatens serpentine grasslands that support rare and endangered species in Santa Clara Valley. The added nitrogen allows nutrient-poor serpentine soils to be invaded by non-native annual grasses that displace native plant species and the animals that rely upon them, including the endangered Bay checkerspot butterfly. The cumulative impacts of nitrogen deposition from a wide variety of sources are being addressed as part of the draft Santa Clara Valley Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The HCP includes a draft conservation strategy that would acquire, enhance and adaptively manage native serpentine grasslands to ensure the long-term survival of serpentine-dependent species. Future nitrogen emissions from the 2021 Campus Master Plan will contribute to this cumulative impact to serpentine grasslands habitat, and the District should commit to paying HCP impact fees related to mitigating the effects of nitrogen deposition associated with implementation of the Campus Master Plan. The HCP is tentatively scheduled for adoption in 2010, and should be assumed to be in place as

the 2021 Campus Master Plan is implemented between now and 2021. More information concerning nitrogen deposition and the HCP can be found at <http://www.scv-habitatplan.org/www/default.aspx>.

IV. Project Consistency with San Jose 2020 General Plan

Page 5-53: Urban Design Policy – 11

The SEIR should include discussion of alternative locations of the Baseball Field Complex on site, internal to the campus, that reduce the impacts of the height on adjacent properties.

Page 5-56: Historic, Archaeological and Cultural Resources – 5

The SEIR should not rely upon a 1999 cultural resources evaluation. Structures should be re-evaluated to confirm whether they have attained increased significance in the last decade.

Page 5-58: Energy Policy – 6

To be consistent with the City's Outdoor Lighting Policy, the campus should employ low-pressure sodium vapor lighting, or the SEIR needs to evaluate the impacts, both in terms of increased energy usage and potential effects to research activities at Lick Observatory of not complying with City Policy.

Will campus buildings meet green building standards? The SEIR should be revised to discuss recent State green building standards and how those relate to the proposed campus buildings. In San Jose, both City and privately constructed buildings are required to meet minimum green building standards, LEED Silver for public buildings over 10,000 square feet. Please refer to the City's Green Building Policy at <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/planning/counter/policies/>.

V. Noise

Page 5-59: Noise Policy – 11

It is not clear the Baseball Field Complex has been located and designed to meet the 55 DNL at the property line. Document the exposure, after mitigation, at all adjacent residential property lines will not exceed 55 DNL.

Page 5-71, Page 5-76: Traffic Roadway Noise Impacts

The discussion Page 5-71 indicates a "small increase in traffic volumes from 10,000 to 12,000 students," however, as stated previously, the SEIR anticipates construction of a second parking garage by 2021 that would not be needed until 15,000 students. If 15,000 students are anticipated by 2021, the roadway noise analysis must be updated to account for that enrollment, which appears to be the traffic growth of 7,700 trips per day discussed second paragraph on Page 5-76.

Page 5-76, first paragraph, states none of the area roadway segments are predicted to experience traffic noise increases greater than +3.0 dB CNEL threshold, yet Table 5.5-6 indicates Renova Dr west of South Bascom would experience a 5.1 dB CNEL increase under cumulative conditions. Whether the project makes a cumulatively considerable contribution to this 5.1 dB increase needs to be discussed in the SEIR.

Existing Operational Noise

The District should consider the noise impacts from existing maintenance operations, specifically garage vacuuming noise impacts by adjusting the hours of the day from early morning to a less-noise sensitive time.

VI. Traffic

Please see previous comments about whether the project description is enrollment of 12,000 or 15,000 students. The traffic analysis evaluates 12,000 students.

Page 5-109: South Bascom Avenue/Kingman Avenue.

The City of San Jose will not approve installation of a traffic signal at this location. This unsignalized intersection is approximately 330' from the signalized intersection of Bascom Avenue and Renova Drive.

Page 5-114 to 5-115: Table 5.7-12 Cumulative Intersection Level of Service.

South Bascom Avenue and Moorpark Avenue AND South Bascom Avenue and Fruitdale Avenue. The intersections of Bascom Avenue/Moorpark Avenue and Bascom Avenue/Fruitdale Avenue are cumulatively impacted by the project. A fair share contribution will be required to mitigate the impacts. Contact the City of San Jose Department of Public Work for assistance (408) 535-6816 in executing an agreement.

Page 5-115 Cumulative Signal Warrant Analysis:

The intersection of Fruitdale Avenue and North Sherman Oaks is an undesirable location for a traffic signal because of the close proximity to the signalized intersection of Fruitdale Avenue and South Sherman Oaks.

Page 5-116 Cumulative Impact

South Bascom Avenue/Kingman Avenue.

Installing a signal at this location is not feasible. Therefore, intersection modifications would be the only option.

Moorpark/Leland/SJCC driveway.

The existing Moorpark/Leland design changed the traffic distribution, and put greater volumes on Leigh Ave, creating backups onto the freeway in the evenings. The 2021 Master Plan should fix this problem.

The Proposed north-south through movements will be allowed up to Parkmoor Avenue; however this modification will require an intersection modification on Parkmoor/Leland to control access to the adjacent residential neighborhood. Parkmoor/Leland is a CalTrans intersection, therefore the project will be required to get CalTrans approval. Modifications to Moorpark/Leland/SJCC driveway create the need for signal modifications at Parkmoor/Leland, and will not be allowed until those signal modifications are permitted by Caltrans and funded by the District.

Moorpark Avenue.

The project should close unused driveways and remove roadway markings on Moorpark Avenue. Coordinate with City of San Jose Department of Public Work staff.

VII. Parking

Page 5-118: On-site Campus Parking

Mitigation Measure 5.7.5-2: Explain the rationale for deferring the parking needs assessment. Is this mitigation related to the timing of parking identified in the master plan, or the amount of parking needed to support the master plan enrollment? If the latter, the District should be conducting the assessment as part of the SEIR to identify the amount of parking necessary to support the anticipated student enrollment, identifying the location of the parking, and accounting for any impacts from the parking facilities. Is the parking included in the master plan based on 12,000 students or 15,000? The inclusion of Parking Garage #2 in the SEIR appears to indicate the latter.

An assessment of student parking in the surrounding neighborhood is needed due to on-campus permit parking fees. Charging for parking has pushed students to park on surrounding neighborhood streets.

VIII. Discussion of Alternatives to the Proposed Project

Page 6-51: No Project Alternative: The SEIR defines the No Project Alternative as consisting of no modifications to the existing, adopted 1999 Master Plan, which includes 15,000 students. The discussion indicates the No Project Alternative is the environmentally superior alternative, but is not feasible because it does not meet any of the project objectives. It is unclear why the 15,000 student plan would not meet project objectives, nor how the SEIR can conclude an alternative with an additional 3,000 students would be environmentally superior in terms of traffic and roadway noise.

The No Project Alternative should be redefined as maintaining the current, baseline setting campus environment and enrollment of 10,000 students. What is now termed the No Project Alternative should be redefined as the 1999 Master Plan Alternative, which at 15,000 students, would not be environmentally superior to the 12,000 student 2021 Master Plan. It is bizarre to describe a larger, prior master plan as simultaneously the No Project Alternative and environmentally superior, yet not meeting project objectives.

Page 6-51: Alternative Baseball Field Complex Location: To avoid the significant impacts of locating the Baseball Field Complex adjacent to Leigh Ave, an Alternative needs to be explored and discussed in the SEIR that locates the Baseball Field Complex elsewhere on the campus. A primary purpose of the SEIR is to inform the decision to construct the Baseball Field Complex along Leigh Ave, yet the SEIR includes no discussion of the options and resulting impacts of locating the Baseball Field Complex elsewhere on the Campus.

At a minimum, the SEIR should discuss, in detail, the District's rationale for proposing to move the Baseball Field Complex from the initial location identified in the 1999 Master Plan, and the feasibility of retaining the Baseball Field Complex in that original location. The District must demonstrate, through the SEIR's alternatives analysis, it is infeasible to locate the Baseball Field Complex in a manner that avoids the significant impacts associated with the Leigh Ave location

before adopting a statement of overriding considerations justifying completing construction at the proposed Leigh Ave location.

IX. Recreation

The District should, in the SEIR, confirm the level of public access provided to the local community to existing and planned campus recreational facilities. Please explain current and planned access of facilities to non-students and reconcile with ballot arguments for recent school bonds.

X. Mitigation Monitoring for Current 1999 Master Plan

The District should make available to the City and community monitoring reports documenting the completion of all mitigation associated with campus facilities constructed as part of the current master plan. Perimeter street frontage landscaping identified in the 1999 Master Plan appears to not have been fully implemented, and such landscaping is an important edge interface treatment with the surrounding community.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft SEIR for this project. We look forward to reviewing the Final SEIR when it becomes available for review. Please provide me with a hard copy or CD version of the complete Final SEIR. You may send the document directly to Janis Moore of my staff. If you have questions about traffic comments, please contact Manuel Pineda of the San Jose Department of Transportation at (408) 975-3295.

Sincerely,

Jw *AKeri Jarmela*
Joseph Horwedel, Director
Planning, Building & Code Enforcement