

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

One of the goals of the San Diego State University (SDSU) Housing Administration's Residential Education Program is to provide all sophomore students with a living environment that includes academic support and social involvement. The goal is part of the Sophomore Success Program, which is an immersive, full-service academic and student life support initiative tailored to second-year students from outside of the SDSU service area.¹ The first class of sophomores to enter the program, which requires non-local sophomores to live on campus, will be part of the 2017 freshman class. This class will live in on-campus suites and apartment communities starting in the fall of 2018.

The Sophomore Success Program will be implemented in two phases. The program will begin with the 2017 freshmen class of Guardian Scholar, Nursing, Honors College, student athletes, and out-of-state and international students, each of whom will continue to live on campus their second year in 2018. The Program will be fully implemented, benefiting all second-year, non-local students, in the fall of 2019.

Data show that students who live on campus are better prepared academically, enjoy an increased sense of community and campus connectedness, and graduate at faster rates than those who do not. Program participants will enjoy customized career development support; flexible guest, meal, and roommate policies; and enhanced safety and security.

One of the primary objectives of the proposed New Student Housing Project (proposed project) is to provide housing in furtherance of the Sophomore Success Program. Specifically, the student housing that will be developed (e.g., the 850 beds to be developed as part of Phase I) will be designed and constructed specifically for use as freshman housing. Providing additional on-campus freshman housing will make available other existing on-campus student residences that are more suitable to sophomore housing.

¹ SDSU service area: Incoming freshmen who graduated from a high school in San Diego County located south of state route 56 and extending eastward, or a high school in Imperial County (SDSU 2017).

In 2013, the college contracted with Carrier Johnson to prepare a feasibility study and preliminary site design for a residential complex to be located on the west side of campus. Of the potential sites identified for future student housing in the 2007 Campus Master Plan Revision, the Chapultepec Hall area was selected due to its capacity to accommodate a greater increase in number of beds, the need for food and convenience services in the project site vicinity, and the ability to create a new campus housing village. Additionally, the west campus site offers walkable access to the campus and to the nearby athletic facilities.

The feasibility study prepared by Carrier Johnson was published in December 2013 and is titled the West Campus Housing Site Master Plan and Program (“CJ Study”). The planning process conducted in support of the feasibility study determined the maximum acceptable height of buildings at the proposed project site and the maximum and appropriate density measured in number of beds. The planning process also involved the analysis of various building configurations and massing studies, which resulted in a proposed maximum density of up to 2,700 beds and proposed building heights of 6 to 13 stories. The West Campus Housing Site Master Plan and Program provides detailed analytical programming information, recommendations for the infrastructure improvements, and a feasibility-level cost estimate in support of the identified 2,700-bed, 6- to 13-story concept design.

After preparation of the CJ Study, the university determined to proceed with development of a modified version of the plan as identified, described, and studied in the document. As of January 2017, SDSU hired a design/build team to further refine the concepts presented in the CJ Study. The concepts developed by SDSU’s design/build team, in combination with the CJ Study, form the basis for the EIR Project Description and the associated environmental impact analysis contained within this environmental impact report (EIR).

1.1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

The proposed project is the expansion of on-campus student housing facilities to be located adjacent to the existing Chapultepec Hall on the western side of the SDSU campus. See **Figure 1-1, Vicinity Map**. Specifically, the proposed project would consist of the development of facilities to accommodate up to 2,566 student housing beds in a series of residential towers to be located on the existing Parking Lot 9 (formerly U Parking Lot) and centered around the existing Chapultepec Hall. See **Figure 1-2, Proposed Site Design**. The proposed project would be developed in three successive phases, and the analyses presented in the EIR will address, where applicable, the environmental impacts that potentially could arise with the construction and development of each phase.

The first phase would include construction of dormitory facilities to house up to 850 student housing beds on the existing Parking Lot 9, east of the existing Chapultepec Hall; the second phase would include construction of facilities to house up to an additional 850 beds in the area located to the west of the existing Chapultepec Hall; and the third phase would include construction of facilities to house up to an additional 866 beds in buildings that would cantilever over the canyon behind Chapultepec Hall. See **Figure 1-3 Proposed Phasing Plan**. The proposed project would consist of up to 10 new buildings. One building would serve as a dining hall (up to 2 stories), while the remainder of the buildings would consist of up to 6- to 12-story towers of single-, double-, and triple-occupancy student housing units. The complex would include outdoor gathering spaces and green space. The proposed project would entail permanent removal of the existing Parking Lot 9; these parking spaces would not be replaced.

1.2 ENVIRONMENTAL PROCEDURES

1.2.1 CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT COMPLIANCE

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.) requires the preparation and certification of an EIR for any project that a lead agency determines may have a significant effect on the environment. This EIR was prepared in compliance with all criteria, standards, and procedures of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15000 et seq.), and is prepared as a project EIR (pursuant to Section 15161 of the CEQA Guidelines). The EIR represents the independent judgment of the Board of Trustees of the California State University as lead agency (14 CCR 15050).

1.2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION AND SCOPING

CEQA establishes mechanisms whereby the public and affected public agencies can be informed about the nature of the project being proposed and the extent and types of impacts that the project and its alternatives would have on the environment should the project or alternatives be implemented. Pursuant to Section 15082 of the CEQA Guidelines, SDSU circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) dated December 9, 2016, to interested agencies, organizations, and individuals. The NOP was also sent to the State Clearinghouse at the California Governor's Office of Planning and Research. The State Clearinghouse assigned a state identification number (SCH No. 2016121025) to this EIR.

The NOP is intended to encourage interagency communication regarding the proposed project so that agencies, organizations, and individuals are afforded an opportunity to respond with specific comments and/or questions regarding the scope and content of the EIR to be prepared. A public scoping meeting was held at the SDSU campus on January 18, 2017, to gather additional public input. An extended 40-day comment period ended on January 20, 2017.

Comments received during the NOP public scoping period were considered during preparation of this EIR. The NOP and all comments received by SDSU are included in **Appendix A** to this EIR. Oral and written comments also were received at the January public scoping meeting. Based on the scope of the proposed action as described in the NOP and the comments received from the public, the following issues were determined to be potentially significant and, therefore, are addressed in Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, of this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geotechnical Resources
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services and Utilities
- Transportation/Circulation and Parking

Of the environmental topics analyzed in Chapter 4, Environmental Analysis, the following are determined to have potentially significant impacts requiring mitigation:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic

Additional CEQA-mandated environmental issue areas, such as Agricultural Resources and Mineral Resources were found not to be significant during the NOP process. These issues are addressed in Chapter 3, Effects Not Found to be Significant During the NOP Process.

1.2.3 OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT PROCESS

This EIR has been made available to members of the public, agencies, and interested parties for a 45-day public review period in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15105. Public review of the Draft EIR is intended to focus “on the sufficiency of the document in identifying and analyzing the possible impacts on the environment and ways in which the significant effects of the project might be avoided or mitigated” (14 CCR 15204). The Notice of Completion of the Draft EIR has been filed with the State Clearinghouse as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15085. In addition, the Notice of Availability of the Draft EIR has been distributed pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15087. This EIR is available for review during the 45-day public review period at the following locations:

- SDSU website: www.sdsu.edu/chapultepec
- SDSU Love Library, 5500 Campanile Drive, San Diego, California, 92182
- College-Rolando Public Library, 6600 Montezuma Road, San Diego, California, 92115

Once the 45-day public review period has concluded, the CSU Board of Trustees will review all public comments on the Draft EIR, provide a written response to comments, and authorize revisions to the Draft EIR text, if necessary. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) will be incorporated into the Final EIR, and it will include monitoring team qualifications, specific monitoring activities, a reporting system, and criteria for evaluating the success of the mitigation measures. Mitigation measures contained in this EIR were developed in consideration of future monitoring requirements and written in sufficient detail to address impacts of the proposed project, referencing the appropriate implementing permits and plans. The Final EIR will include all comment letters received on the Draft EIR; responses to comments; a Final EIR preface; and, if applicable, edits made to the EIR as a result of public review.

1.2.4 SCOPE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

This EIR evaluates the potential short-term (during construction), long-term (post-construction), direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the proposed New Student Housing Project. As previously described, the proposed project consists of the expansion of on-campus student housing to provide sleeping accommodations for an additional 2566 students, and also includes associated support facilities.

1.2.5 REFERENCE NOTES

As a state agency, CSU, the California State University, is not subject to local government planning regulations such as policies and guidelines outlined in the City of San Diego General Plan. Notwithstanding, CSU considers local agencies and related planning documents where feasible. Accordingly, any reference to local planning documents generally is provided for informational purposes only unless otherwise noted. For this reason, the EIR references the certain City of San Diego planning documents, including the City's General Plan and associated documents.

1.3 INTENDED USES OF THE EIR

According to CEQA Section 21002.1(a), "The purpose of an environmental impact report is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided." This EIR provides relevant information concerning the potential environmental effects associated with construction and operation of the proposed project, and identifies and evaluates potentially significant effects that may result from implementation of the project. It is intended for use by decision makers and the public.

As the designated lead agency, the CSU Board of Trustees has assumed responsibility for preparing this document. The decision to implement the proposed project is within the purview of the CSU Board of Trustees. When deciding whether to approve the proposed project, the CSU Board of Trustees will use the information provided in this EIR to consider potential impacts to the physical environment associated with the project. The CSU Board of Trustees will consider all written comments received on the Draft EIR during the 45-day public review period in making its decision to certify the EIR as complete and in compliance with CEQA, and in making its determination whether to approve or deny the project. In the final review of the document, environmental considerations and economic and social factors will be weighed to determine the most appropriate course of action.

Subsequent to certification of the Final EIR, agencies with permitting authority over all or portions of the project will use the Final EIR as the basis for their evaluation of environmental impacts related to the project and for the approval or denial of applicable permits.

Specifically, the EIR will be used in considering the approval of the following discretionary actions necessary for implementation of the proposed project:

- The State Fire Marshall will use the Final EIR to review and approve a Facility Fire and Life Safety Program for the Master Plan.
- The Regional Water Quality Control Board will use the Final EIR to evaluate and issue a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.
- The South Coast Air Quality Management District will use the Final EIR to authorize construction activities and/or issue permits to operate.
- The City of San Diego will use the Final EIR and supporting documentation in its decision to grant applicable Fire Department approvals and issue discretionary permits, if any, for construction within City of San Diego rights-of-way and/or vacation of City of San Diego rights-of-way, if necessary.

Additional information regarding University Board of Trustees, City of San Diego, and agency permits and approvals is detailed in Section 2.4, Discretionary Actions, of this EIR.

1.4 ORGANIZATION AND CONTENT OF THE EIR

This EIR is organized to provide an analysis of the potentially significant environmental impacts, mitigation measures, and alternatives for the proposed project. All elements of the project are analyzed at a “project level.”

To describe the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, and mitigation measures and alternatives for the proposed project, this EIR is organized as follows:

- An **Executive Summary** is provided at the beginning of the EIR that outlines the conclusions of the environmental analysis and a summary of the project as compared to the alternatives analyzed in this EIR. The Executive Summary also includes a table summarizing all environmental impacts identified in this EIR, along with the associated mitigation measures proposed to reduce or avoid each impact.
- **Chapter 1, Introduction**, provides an overview of the EIR, introducing the proposed project, applicable environmental review procedures, and format of the EIR.
- **Chapter 2, Project Description**, provides the project location, project background and objectives, existing uses, need for the project, description of the proposed project components and phasing, and required discretionary approvals.

- **Chapter 3, Cumulative Methods and Projects**, includes a summary of potential cumulatively considerable projects that the environmental topical chapters have used to evaluate cumulative impacts.
- **Chapter 4, Environmental Impact Analysis**, provides an analysis of the potentially significant environmental impacts identified for the project, as well as proposed mitigation measures to reduce or avoid any potentially significant impacts.
- **Chapter 5, Effects Found Not to be Significant**, includes a summary of the environmental topics that were found, through the Initial Study process, to have a less than significant impact or no impact to the environment.
- **Chapter 6, Project Alternatives**, discusses three alternatives to the proposed project, including the No Project Alternative, the Reduced Density Alternative, and the Alternative Site Alternatives 1 and 2.
- **Chapter 7, Growth Inducement**, discusses the project and whether the project would prompt future, additional growth.
- **Chapter 8, Other CEQA Considerations**, addresses environmental areas where significant environmental effects cannot be avoided and any significant irreversible environmental changes that would result from implementation of the project, as well as potential growth-inducing impacts.
- **Chapter 9, List of Preparers**, lists all individuals that participated in the preparation of this EIR.

The attached appendices consist of technical studies prepared for the project, as listed in the Table of Contents.

1.5 MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM

As required by CEQA Guidelines sections 15097 and 15091, the CSU Board of Trustees will prepare a MMRP prior to project approval. The MMRP will include all mitigation measures identified in the EIR, the entity responsible for implementation, implementation timing (prior to construction, during construction, and/or after construction), and any follow-up reporting requirements (such as submittal of materials to regulatory agencies). The CSU Board of Trustees, as the designated lead agency for the project, is responsible for enforcing and verifying that each mitigation measure is implemented.

1.6 REFERENCES

San Diego State University 2017. San Diego State University Admissions, Local Admission Area. Accessed March 1, 2017. <http://arweb.sdsu.edu/es/admissions/local.html>.

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SDSU
New Student Housing Project EIR



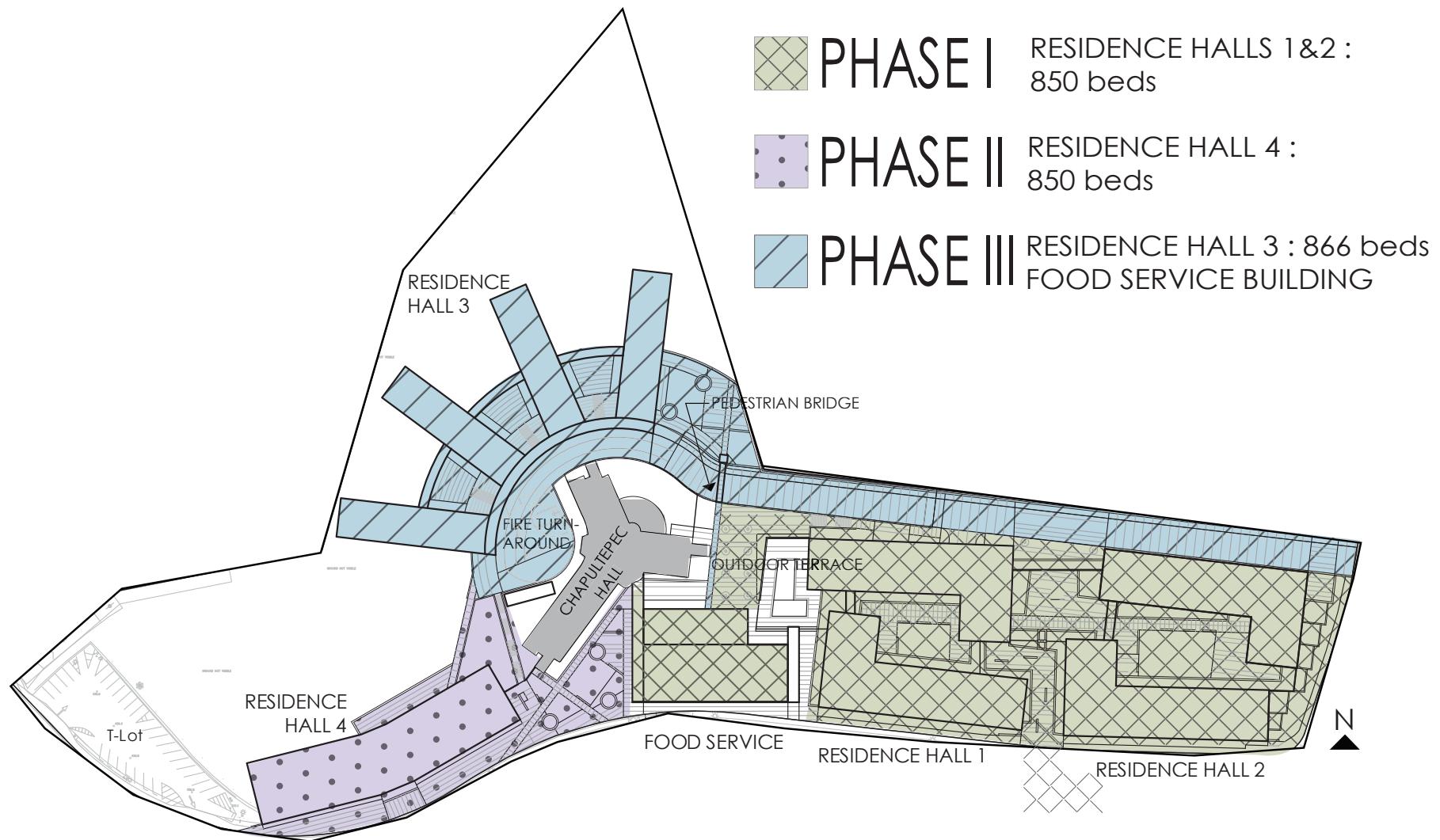
Figure 1-1
Vicinity Map

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