

1 INTRODUCTION

This ~~draft~~ final environmental impact report (~~Draft Final~~ EIR) evaluates the environmental impacts of the proposed California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt (Cal Poly Humboldt) Student Housing Project (project). This ~~Draft~~ Final EIR has been prepared under the direction of the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees (Trustees) in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code [PRC] Section 21000 et seq.) and the State CEQA Guidelines. This chapter of the ~~Draft~~ Final EIR provides information on:

- ▶ project requiring environmental analysis (synopsis);
- ▶ type, purpose, and intended uses of this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR;
- ▶ scope of this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR;
- ▶ agency roles and responsibilities; and
- ▶ organization of this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR.

1.1 PROJECT REQUIRING ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section presents a synopsis of project characteristics. For a detailed discussion of the project, see Chapter 2, "Project Description."

Cal Poly Humboldt proposes construction of a student housing complex 0.5 mile northwest of the Cal Poly Humboldt main campus. The project would provide up to 964 student beds in approximately 240 apartment-style, student residences for undergraduate and graduate students attending Cal Poly Humboldt. Student housing opportunities will be provided in a variety of two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartment-style units, with the majority being two-bedroom/two-bath units. Development would consist of two housing buildings located within the central portion of the site. Several on-site amenities would be included as part of the project, including a fitness room, common lounge spaces, study spaces, computer rooms, television rooms, a café/market, conference rooms, and indoor bicycle parking. Exterior site features would include green space, recreational facilities (e.g., multifunction, pickleball, and/or volleyball court[s]), outdoor cooking amenities (e.g., barbecue area for on-site residents), and appropriate hardscapes (i.e., paths between various on-site features, including buildings and parking). Additionally, the project would include 340 single-occupancy vehicle parking spaces and additional bicycle parking (covered).

As proposed, the on-site buildings would generally be taller at the center of the site and step down along the perimeter of the project site, to reduce the building mass and scale in proximity to the surrounding single-family residential neighborhoods. The western building would be oriented in an L-shape with the east-west extension of the building being five stories in height and the north-south extension being six stories in height. The eastern building would be generally seven stories in height; however, the easternmost section of the building would be limited to five stories. The separation between the buildings and within the courtyard spaces of each building would allow for accessible open space and communal activities within the proposed development.

The 12.8-acre project site is located in the City of Arcata (City) on the northeast edge of the Sunset Neighborhood, near the intersection of the St. Louis Road and US Highway 101 (US 101) overcrossing. The project site is bordered by US 101 on the east, single-family residences on the south and west, the Janes Creek Meadows riparian/open space area and St. Louis Road on the north, and the Mad River Lumber Company on the northeast.

1.2 PURPOSE AND INTENDED USES OF THIS ~~DRAFT~~ FINAL EIR

As noted above, this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR has been prepared under the Trustees' direction in accordance with the requirements of CEQA (PRC Sections 21000-21177) and the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000-15387). The Trustees serve as the lead agency under CEQA for

consideration of certification of this EIR and potential project approval; CCR Section 151367 defines the lead agency as the agency with principal responsibility for carrying out and approving a project. Cal Poly Humboldt is part of the CSU, a constitutionally created entity of the State of California with the power to consider and provide authority for all land use decisions on property owned or controlled by the CSU that are in furtherance of the CSU's education purposes.

According to CEQA, preparation of an EIR is required whenever it can be fairly argued, based on substantial evidence, that a proposed project may result in a significant environmental impact. An EIR is an informational document used to inform public-agency decision makers and the general public of the significant environmental impacts of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant impacts, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project that could feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project while substantially lessening or avoiding any of the significant environmental impacts. Public agencies are required to consider the information presented in the EIR when determining whether to approve a project. This ~~Draft~~ Final EIR has been prepared to meet the requirements of Section 15126 of the State CEQA Guidelines. As described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, an EIR must consider all phases of a project when evaluating its impact on the physical environment, including:

- (1) significant environmental effects of the project,
- (2) significant environmental effects that cannot be avoided if the project is implemented,
- (3) significant irreversible environmental changes that would be involved in the project should it be implemented,
- (4) growth-inducing impacts of the project,
- (5) mitigation measures proposed to minimize the significant effect, and
- (6) alternatives to the proposed project.

As noted in Chapter 2, "Project Description," this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR evaluates the entire project. This ~~Draft~~ Final EIR also identifies alternatives to the Student Housing Project that would reduce or avoid potential adverse environmental effects. Mitigation measures are identified in this EIR that, if adopted, would be implemented to reduce and minimize physical environmental effects of the project components, where feasible. Should the project be approved and the EIR certified, implementation of mitigation measures will be monitored to ensure implementation as the Student Housing Project moves forward in a manner consistent with the Final EIR.

1.3 SCOPE OF THIS ~~DRAFT~~ FINAL EIR

As described in further detail in the notice of preparation (NOP) (Appendix A), this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR evaluates the potential direct and indirect environmental impacts of the project. This ~~Draft~~ Final EIR includes an evaluation of the following environmental issue areas, as well as other CEQA-mandated issues (e.g., cumulative impacts, growth-inducing impacts, significant and unavoidable impacts, alternatives):

- ▶ Aesthetics;
- ▶ Air Quality;
- ▶ Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources;
- ▶ Biological Resources;
- ▶ Energy;
- ▶ Greenhouse Gas Emissions;
- ▶ Land Use and Planning;
- ▶ Noise;
- ▶ Population and Housing;
- ▶ Public Services and Recreation;
- ▶ Transportation; and
- ▶ Utilities and Service Systems.

The remaining issue areas identified in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines were evaluated as part of the scoping process, and it was determined that potentially significant impacts on these issue areas would not occur as a result of project implementation, as discussed in the "Effects Found Not to Be Significant" section in Chapter 3 of this EIR. Under the CEQA statutes and the State CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency may limit an EIR's discussion of environmental effects when such effects are not considered potentially significant (PRC Section 21002.1[e]; State

CEQA Guidelines Sections 15128, 15143). The determination of which impacts would be potentially significant and therefore evaluated in detail in this EIR was made for this project based on review of applicable planning documents, fieldwork, feedback from public and agency consultation, comments received on the NOP (see Appendix A of this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR), research, and analysis of relevant project data.

1.4 RESPONSIBLE AND TRUSTEE AGENCIES

Under CEQA, responsible agencies are State and local public agencies other than the lead agency that have the authority to carry out or approve a project or that are required to approve a portion of the project for which a lead agency is preparing or has prepared an EIR. Trustee agencies are State agencies with legal jurisdiction over natural resources affected by a project that are held in trust for the people of the State of California.

Chapter 2, "Project Description," identifies the agencies which may have responsibility for or jurisdiction over implementation of elements of the project. The list is not intended to imply that specific permits or actions would occur; rather, it lists agencies that *may* have responsibilities over project components and the potential associated reasons. Chapter 3 of this EIR provides detailed analysis that explores further the potential for the need for responsible agency action. This EIR and any environmental analysis relying on this EIR are expected to be used to satisfy the CEQA requirements of the listed responsible and trustee agencies.

EIR PROCESS

An NOP for the project was originally distributed on March 1, 2022, to responsible agencies, interested parties, and organizations, as well as private organizations and individuals that may have an interest in the project. During the 30-day public review period of the NOP, a virtual public scoping meeting was held on March 16, 2022. The purpose of the NOP and the scoping meeting was to provide notification that an EIR for the project was being prepared and to solicit input on the scope and content of the environmental document. As a result of the review of existing information and the scoping process, it was determined that each of the issue areas listed above should be evaluated fully in ~~this~~ Draft EIR.

However, during refinement of the design of the project, the size of the project was increased from 850 student beds (as identified in the March 2022 NOP) to 1,060 student beds. As a result of the increase in size of the project site and the substantial increase in potential on-site student beds, an NOP of an EIR for the project was reissued for a 30-day public review period on June 28, 2022, ending on July 27, 2022. In addition, a second scoping meeting was held virtually on July 20, 2022. The NOP (original and revised) and responses to the NOP are included in Appendix A of this ~~Draft~~ Final EIR. The NOP was also available online at <https://facilitymgmt.humboldt.edu/craftsman-student-housing> and was posted with the State Clearinghouse (SCH Number 2022030008). As noted in further detail in Chapter 2, "Project Description," and as a result of further refinement of the design and engineering of the project, the project evaluated in this EIR proposes up to 964 student beds on the project site.

~~This~~ Draft EIR ~~is being~~ was circulated for public review and comment for a period of 45 days, beginning on October 20, 2022, and ending on December 5, 2022. During this period, comments from the general public, as well as organizations and agencies, on environmental issues ~~may be submitted to~~ were accepted by the lead agency.

Upon completion of the public review and comment period, ~~at this~~ Final EIR ~~will be~~ was prepared that ~~will~~ included comments on the Draft EIR received during the public review period, responses to those comments and any necessary clarifications or revisions to the Draft EIR in response to public comments. The EIR for the project will comprise both the Draft EIR and Final EIR documents.

Before approving the Student Housing Project, the lead agency is required to certify that the EIR has been completed in compliance with CEQA, that the decision-making body reviewed and considered the information in the EIR, and that the EIR reflects the independent judgment of the lead agency.

1.5 DRAFT FINAL EIR ORGANIZATION

This Draft Final EIR is organized into chapters, as identified and briefly described below. Chapters are further divided into sections (e.g., Chapter 3, “Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures,” and Section 3.5, “Energy”):

Executive Summary: This chapter introduces the Student Housing Project; provides a summary of the environmental review process, effects found not to be significant, and key environmental issues; and lists significant impacts and mitigation measures to reduce significant impacts to a less-than-significant level, where feasible.

Chapter 1, “Introduction”: This chapter provides a description of type, purpose, and intended uses of this Draft Final EIR; the scope of this Draft Final EIR; agency roles and responsibilities; and the public review process.

Chapter 2, “Project Description”: This chapter describes the location, background, and goals and objectives for the project and describes the project elements in detail.

Chapter 3, “Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures”: This chapter evaluates the expected environmental impacts that would occur as a result of project implementation, arranged into sections by subject area (e.g., aesthetics, air quality). Within each subsection of Chapter 3, the regulatory background, existing conditions, analysis methodology, and thresholds of significance are described. The anticipated changes to the existing conditions after development of the project are then evaluated for each subject area. For any significant or potentially significant impact that would result from project implementation, mitigation measures are presented and the level of impact significance after mitigation is identified. Environmental impacts are numbered sequentially within each section (e.g., Impact 3.2-1, Impact 3.2-2, etc.). Any required mitigation measures are numbered to correspond to the impact numbering; therefore, the mitigation measure for Impact 3.2-2 would be Mitigation Measure 3.2-2.

Chapter 4, “Cumulative Impacts”: This chapter provides information required by CEQA regarding cumulative impacts that would result from implementation of the project together with other past, present, and probable future projects.

Chapter 5, “Alternatives”: This chapter evaluates alternatives to the project, including alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration, the No-Project Alternative, and three alternative development options. The environmentally superior alternative is identified.

Chapter 6, “Other CEQA Sections”: This chapter evaluates growth-inducing impacts and irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources and discloses any significant and unavoidable adverse impacts.

Chapter 7, “Report Preparers”: This chapter identifies the preparers of this document.

Chapter 8, “References”: This chapter identifies the documents and individuals used as sources for the analysis.