Mesa College Comprehensive Master Plan

SCH No. 2025120225

Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

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Table of Contents

Section **Page**

Executive Summary **ES-1**
- ES.1 Overview ES-1
- ES.2 Project Background ES-1
- ES.3 Project Summary ES-2
- ES.4 Summary of Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures ES-5
- ES.5 Project Alternatives ES-23
- ES.6 Areas of Known Controversy and Issues to be Resolved ES-26

1.0 Introduction **1-1**
- 1.1 Purpose of the PEIR 1-1
- 1.2 Scope and Intended Use of the PEIR 1-2
- 1.3 Organization of the PEIR 1-2
- 1.4 Environmental Review Process 1-4
  - 1.4.1 Notice of Preparation 1-4
  - 1.4.2 Public Review of the Draft PEIR 1-4
  - 1.4.3 Publication of the Final PEIR 1-5
- 1.5 Responsible and Trustee Agencies 1-5

2.0 Project Description **2-1**
- 2.1 Project Background 2-1
  - 2.1.1 Mesa2030 Comprehensive Master Plan Overview 2-1
  - 2.1.2 Measure HH Funding 2-1
  - 2.1.3 Campus Population Growth 2-1
- 2.2 Project Location and Setting 2-2
- 2.3 Project Objectives 2-4
- 2.4 Project Components 2-4
  - 2.4.1 Master Plan Overview 2-4
  - 2.4.2 Campus-Wide Improvements 2-4
  - 2.4.3 Near-Term Projects 2-5
  - 2.4.4 Long-Term Projects 2-6
  - 2.4.5 Development Characteristics 2-8
- 2.5 Master Plan Implementation 2-9

3.0 Environmental Analysis **3-1**
- 3.1 Aesthetics 3.1-1
  - 3.1.1 Environmental Setting 3.1-1
  - 3.1.2 Regulatory Framework 3.1-4
  - 3.1.3 Thresholds of Significance 3.1-7
  - 3.1.4 Impact Analysis 3.1-8
  - 3.1.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis 3.1-14

Table of Contents (cont.)

Section		Page
3.2	Air Quality	3.2-1
3.2.1	Environmental Setting	3.2-1
3.2.2	Regulatory Framework	3.2-6
3.2.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.2-12
3.2.4	Impact Analysis	3.2-13
3.2.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.2-21
3.3	Biological Resources	3.3-1
3.3.1	Environmental Setting	3.3-1
3.3.2	Regulatory Framework	3.3-5
3.3.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.3-9
3.3.4	Impact Analysis	3.3-9
3.3.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.3-12
3.4	Cultural Resources	3.4-1
3.4.1	Environmental Setting	3.4-1
3.4.2	Regulatory Framework	3.4-11
3.4.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.4-17
3.4.4	Impact Analysis	3.4-17
3.4.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.4-25
3.5	Energy	3.5-1
3.5.1	Environmental Setting	3.5-1
3.5.2	Regulatory Framework	3.5-3
3.5.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.5-11
3.5.4	Impact Analysis	3.5-11
3.5.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.5-16
3.6	Geology and Soils	3.6-1
3.6.1	Environmental Setting	3.6-1
3.6.2	Regulatory Framework	3.6-5
3.6.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.6-10
3.6.4	Impact Analysis	3.6-11
3.6.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.6-21
3.7	Greenhouse Gas Emissions	3.7-1
3.7.1	Environmental Setting	3.7-1
3.7.2	Regulatory Framework	3.7-5
3.7.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.7-16
3.7.4	Impact Analysis	3.7-18
3.7.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.7-28
3.8	Hazards and Hazardous Materials	3.8-1
3.8.1	Environmental Setting	3.8-1
3.8.2	Regulatory Framework	3.8-2
3.8.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.8-10
3.8.4	Impact Analysis	3.8-10
3.8.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.8-18

Table of Contents (cont.)

Section		Page
3.9	Hydrology and Water Quality	3.9-1
3.9.1	Environmental Setting	3.9-1
3.9.2	Regulatory Framework	3.9-5
3.9.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.9-12
3.9.4	Impact Analysis	3.9-13
3.9.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.9-20
3.10	Land Use and Planning	3.10-1
3.10.1	Environmental Setting	3.10-1
3.10.2	Regulatory Framework	3.10-1
3.10.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.10-4
3.10.4	Impact Analysis	3.10-5
3.10.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.10-8
3.11	Noise	3.11-1
3.11.1	Environmental Setting	3.11-1
3.11.2	Regulatory Framework	3.11-5
3.11.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.11-12
3.11.4	Impact Analysis	3.11-14
3.11.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.11-27
3.12	Population and Housing	3.12-1
3.12.1	Environmental Setting	3.12-1
3.12.2	Regulatory Framework	3.12-2
3.12.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.12-4
3.12.4	Impact Analysis	3.12-4
3.12.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.12-7
3.13	Public Services	3.13-1
3.13.1	Environmental Setting	3.13-1
3.13.2	Regulatory Framework	3.13-3
3.13.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.13-5
3.13.4	Impact Analysis	3.13-5
3.13.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.13-11
3.14	Recreation	3.14-1
3.14.1	Environmental Setting	3.14-1
3.14.2	Regulatory Framework	3.14-2
3.14.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.14-4
3.14.4	Impact Analysis	3.14-4
3.14.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.14-7
3.15	Transportation	3.15-1
3.15.1	Environmental Setting	3.15-1
3.15.2	Regulatory Framework	3.15-3
3.15.3	Thresholds of Significance	3.15-5
3.15.4	Impact Analysis	3.15-6
3.15.5	Cumulative Impact Analysis	3.15-11

Table of Contents (cont.)

Section **Page**

3.16 Tribal Cultural Resources 3.16-1
3.16.1 Environmental Setting 3.16-1
3.16.2 Regulatory Framework 3.16-3
3.16.3 Thresholds of Significance 3.16-4
3.16.4 Impact Analysis 3.16-5
3.16.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis 3.16-7
3.17 Utilities and Service Systems 3.17-1
3.17.1 Environmental Setting 3.17-1
3.17.2 Regulatory Framework 3.17-6
3.17.3 Thresholds of Significance 3.17-11
3.17.4 Impact Analysis 3.17-12
3.17.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis 3.17-21
3.18 Wildfire 3.18-1
3.18.1 Environmental Setting 3.18-1
3.18.2 Regulatory Framework 3.18-3
3.18.3 Thresholds of Significance 3.18-6
3.18.4 Impact Analysis 3.18-7
3.18.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis 3.18-12

4.0 Effects Found Not To Be Significant 4-1
4.1 Agriculture and Forestry Resources 4-1
4.2 Mineral Resources 4-1

5.0 Other CEQA Considerations 5-1
5.1 Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Impacts 5-1
5.2 Significant and Irreversible Environmental Effects 5-1
5.2.1 Irreversible Commitment of Resources 5-2
5.2.2 Irreversible Environmental Changes 5-3
5.2.3 Potential Environmental Damage from Accidents 5-4
5.3 Growth Inducement 5-5
5.3.1 Direct Population Growth 5-6
5.3.2 Economic Growth 5-6
5.3.3 Removing Obstacles to Growth 5-7
6.0 Project Alternatives 6-1
6.1 Introduction 6-1
6.2 Project Objectives 6-1
6.3 Significant Environmental Effects of the Project 6-2
6.4 Alternatives Considered but Rejected 6-3
6.4.1 No Project Alternative – No New Development 6-4
6.4.2 Alternative Campus Location 6-4
6.4.3 Off-Site Housing Alternative 6-5

Table of Contents (cont.)

Section **Page**

6.4.4 Increased Campus Housing Alternative 6-5
6.5 Analysis of Project Alternatives 6-6
6.5.1 No Project Alternative – Near-Term Projects Only 6-7
6.5.2 Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative 6-11
6.5.3 Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative 6-15
6.6 Environmentally Superior Alternative 6-19

7.0 PEIR Preparers 7-1
7.1 Lead Agency 7-1
7.2 Environmental Impact Report Consultant 7-1
7.3 Technical Report Consultants 7-1

8.0 References 8-1

List of Appendices

A Notice of Preparation
B Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report
C Biological Resources Technical Report
D Archaeological Technical Report
E Historic Resources Survey Report
F Geology and Soils Technical Study
G Paleontological Resources Technical Report
H Noise Technical Report
I Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis

List of Figures

No. **Title** **Follows Page**

2-1 Regional Location 2-2
2-2 Aerial Photograph 2-2
2-3 Existing Campus Facilities 2-2
2-4 Comprehensive Master Plan Facility Overview 2-4
3.3-1 Vegetation and Special-Status Species 3.3-2
3.3-2 Potential Jurisdictional Features 3.3-2
3.4-1 Archaeological Resource Sensitivity 3.4-22
3.6-1 Geologic Hazards 3.6-4
3.6-2 Paleontological Sensitivity Areas 3.6-18
3.11-1 Noise Measurement Locations 3.11-4
3.18-1 Wildfire Hazard Zones 3.18-2

Table of Contents (cont.)

List of Tables

No.	Title	Page
ES-1	Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures	ES-6
ES-2	Comparison of Project and Alternatives Impacts	ES-24
3.2-1	Common Sources and Human Health Effects of Criteria Air Pollutants	3.2-2
3.2-2	Air Quality Monitoring Data	3.2-4
3.2-3	Existing Daily Operational Emissions	3.2-6
3.2-4	Ambient Air Quality Standards	3.2-6
3.2-5	San Diego Air Basin Attainment Status	3.2-8
3.2-6	Screening Level Thresholds for Air Quality Impact Analysis	3.2-13
3.2-7	Net Daily Operational Emissions at Buildout	3.2-16
3.2-8	Maximum Daily Construction Emissions	3.2-17
3.3-1	Existing Vegetation Communities/Land Use Types	3.3-1
3.3-2	Sensitive Plant and Animal Species	3.3-3
3.7-1	Global Warming Potentials and Atmospheric Lifetimes	3.7-3
3.7-2	California State GHG Emissions by Sector	3.7-4
3.7-3	Existing Operational GHG Emissions	3.7-4
3.7-4	Operational GHG Emissions	3.7-19
3.7-5	Scoping Plan Consistency Analysis	3.7-20
3.7-6	Near-Term Construction GHG Emissions by Year	3.7-23
3.11-1	Noise Measurement Results	3.11-3
3.11-2	Gypsum Board Design Requirements	3.11-8
3.11-3	City of San Diego Land Use Noise Compatibility Guidelines	3.11-9
3.11-4	City of San Diego Exterior Noise Limits	3.11-11
3.11-5	Construction Equipment Average Noise Levels	3.11-15
3.11-6	Traffic Noise Levels	3.11-17
3.11-7	Screening Distances by Vibration Sensitive Receptor Type	3.11-23
6-1	Comparison of Project and Alternatives Impacts	6-6

Acronyms and Abbreviations

°F	degrees Fahrenheit
µg/m^3	micrograms per cubic meter
µPa	micro-Pascals
AAM	annual arithmetic mean
AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	asbestos-containing material
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADT	average daily trips
AF	acre-feet
AFY	acre-feet per year
AIA	Airport Influence Area
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ALUCP	Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan
AMSL	above mean sea level
ASHRAE	American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
Attainment Plan	2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone in San Diego County
Basin Plan	Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin
bmp	best management practice
BTU	British thermal unit
CAA	Clean Air Act
CAAQS	California Ambient Air Quality Standards
CAFE	Corporate Average Fuel Economy
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CalEPA	California Environmental Protection Agency
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
CALGreen	California Green Building Standards Code
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CAP	Climate Action Plan
CAPCOA	California Air Pollution Control Officers Association
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEC	California Energy Commission
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFC	California Fire Code

Acronyms and Abbreviations (cont.)

CFG Code	California Fish and Game Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGS	California Geological Survey
CH_4	methane
CHRIS	California Historical Resources Information System
City	City of San Diego
CMP	Mesa College Comprehensive Master Plan
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CNRA	California Natural Resources Agency
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2e	carbon dioxide equivalent
County	County of San Diego
CPUC	California Public Utilities Commission
CRHR	California Register of Historic Resources
CRPR	California Rare Plant Rank
CSU	California State University
CWA	Clean Water Act
CWUIC	California Wildland Urban Interface Code
dB	decibel
dBA	A-weighted decibels
District	San Diego Community College District
DOC	California Department of Conservation
DPM	diesel particulate matter
DSA	Division of the State Architect
DTSC	California Department of Toxic Substances Control
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
EIA	U.S. Energy Information Administration
EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
ELAC	English Language Acquisition
EO	Executive Order
EUI	energy usage intensity
EV	electric vehicle
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FCI	Facilities Condition Index
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FT	Federally threatened

Acronyms and Abbreviations (cont.)

FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GHG	greenhouse gas
g/L	grams per liter
GSF	gross square foot/feet
GWP	global warming potential
HA	hydrologic area
HABS	Historic American Buildings Survey
HALS	Historic American Landscapes Survey
HELIX	HELIX Environmental Planning
HFC	hydrofluorocarbon
HMBP	Hazardous Materials Business Plan
HSA	hydrologic subarea
HU	hydrologic unit
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air conditioning
Hz	Hertz
I-	Interstate
IBC	International Building Code
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
kBTU	kilo British Thermal Units
km	kilometer
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
kWh	kilowatt hour
LBP	lead-based paint
LCFS	Low Carbon Fuel Standard
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
LEED-NC	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for New Construction
L_{EQ}	time-averaged noise level
LID	low impact development
LLG	Linscott, Law & Greenspan Engineers
L_V	vibration velocity level
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
mgd	million gallons per day
MHPA	Multi-Habitat Planning Area
MMT	million metric tons
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
mph	miles per hour
MPO	Metropolitan Planning Organization
MRZ	mineral resource zone

Acronyms and Abbreviations (cont.)

MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
MSCP	Multiple Species Conservation Program
MT	metric ton
MTS	Metropolitan Transit System
MW	megawatt
MWD	Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
MWELO	Model Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance
MWh	megawatt hours
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NCCP	Natural Community Conservation Planning
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOD	Notice of Determination
NOP	Notice of Preparation
NO_x	nitrogen oxide
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NSLU	noise-sensitive land use
O_3	ozone
OEHHA	Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment
OITC	Outdoor-Indoor Sound Transmission Class
OPR	Governor's Office of Planning and Research
PEIR	Program Environmental Impact Report
PFC	perfluorocarbon
PG&E	Pacific Gas & Electric
PLWTP	Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant
PM	particulate matter
PM_{10}	coarse particulate matter, 10 microns or less in diameter
$PM_{2.5}$	fine particulate matter, 2.5 microns or less in diameter
ppb	parts per billion
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	Public Resources Code
project	Mesa College Comprehensive Master Plan
PUD	City of San Diego Public Utilities Department
PV	photovoltaic

Acronyms and Abbreviations (cont.)

RAQS	2022 Revision to the Regional Air Quality Strategy for San Diego County
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RHNA	Regional Housing Needs Assessment
ROG	reactive organic gas
ROW	right-of-way
RPS	Renewable Portfolio Standard
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board
SANDAG	San Diego Association of Governments
SB	Senate Bill
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCH	State Clearinghouse
SCIC	South Coastal Information Center
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SDAB	San Diego Air Basin
SDAPCD	San Diego County Air Pollution Control District
SDCRAA	San Diego County Regional Airport Authority
SDCWA	San Diego County Water Authority
SDFD	San Diego Fire-Rescue Department
SDG&E	San Diego Gas & Electric
SDNHM	San Diego Natural History Museum
SDRHR	San Diego Register of Historic Resources
SDUSD	San Diego Unified School District
SF	square foot/feet
SF_6	sulfur hexafluoride
SGMA	Sustainable Groundwater Management Act
SHB	Shot Hole Borers
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SO_X	sulfur oxides
SoCalGas	Southern California Gas
SPL	sound pressure level
SR	State Route
SSC	Species of Special Concern
STC	Sound Transmission Class
SWIS	Solid Waste Information System
SWPPP	Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
SWQMP	Storm Water Quality Management Plan
SWRCB	State Water Resources Control Board
TAC	toxic air contaminant
TAZ	traffic analysis zone
TCA	traditionally and culturally affiliated

Acronyms and Abbreviations (cont.)

TIS	Transportation Impact Study
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TPA	Transit Priority Area
TSM	Transportation Study Manual
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UWMP	Urban Water Management Plan
VdB	vibration velocity in decibels
VHFHSZ	Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone
VMT	vehicle miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compound
WL	Watch List
WMA	Watershed Management Area
WPCP	Water Pollution Control Plan
WQIP	Water Quality Improvement Plan
WQTR	Water Quality Technical Report
WUI	Wildland Urban Interface
ZEV	zero emission vehicle

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ES.1 Overview

This Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the Mesa College Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP; project) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The CMP proposes a series of physical improvements across the campus that would accommodate anticipated enrollment increases and assist the San Diego Community College District (District) in meeting its educational and programming for Mesa College.

The District serves as the Lead Agency for the Mesa College CMP PEIR. The District is governed by the Board of Trustees, which has the principal responsibility for approving campus planning documents and contracts for construction of new campus development. In compliance with CEQA, the purpose of this PEIR is to provide the District Board of Trustees and the general public with information concerning the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of future projects identified in the CMP. This PEIR assesses impacts that would result from CMP implementation, presents mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce impacts deemed to be significant, and provides analysis of alternatives that would reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts. The PEIR provides an opportunity to consider both the programmatic effects of the CMP and provide the project-specific analysis of near-term projects needed for the District and responsible agencies to consider in issuing permits and approvals required for campus projects. Once certified, this PEIR would serve as the programmatic environmental document for the campus, enabling future projects to tier from the analysis in accordance with the subsequent review standards of CEQA.

ES.2 Project Background

ES.2.1 Mesa2030 Comprehensive Master Plan Overview

The CMP, approved by the District Board of Trustees on May 13, 2021, is the ten-year educational and facilities master plan for Mesa College. This document includes an analysis of Mesa College's effectiveness in meeting its mission, projected demographics and economic changes, and feedback from internal and external campus communities. This information provides for the development of two long-term guides for future decisions: Mesa2030 Goals and Facilities Planning Principles. Based on the guiding goals and principles, Chapter 5 of the CMP describes a series of site improvement and facility projects for the campus. The designs and concepts presented in the CMP are conceptual and intended to serve as a framework for the future detailed design of campus improvements as funding becomes available.

ES.2.2 Measure HH Funding

On November 5, 2024, San Diego voters approved Measure HH, authorizing the District to issue $3.5 billion in bonds for District facility upgrades. Based on the campus facility needs and potential improvements described in the master plan for each District campus, certain projects have been prioritized to move forward with initial funding from Measure HH bond sales. Two of these projects would be constructed at Mesa College. Future bond sales authorized by Measure HH would fund

additional improvements described in the CMP as well as the master plans for the other District campuses.

ES.2.3 Campus Population Growth

For the purposes of this PEIR, a 1.5 percent annual growth rate has been selected to ensure that the environmental analysis accounts for reasonably foreseeable changes in on-campus enrollment over the next 20 years. This growth rate reflects the potential for attracting and accommodating additional students in on-campus courses through implementation of planned improvements to campus facilities, academic offerings, and student services, while also providing a conservative approach for environmental analysis and ensuring that the PEIR addresses potential impacts associated with continued on-campus enrollment growth. Applying a growth rate of 1.5 percent growth in the on-campus population per year, 15,358 on-campus students are anticipated to attend Mesa College in 2045, an increase of 3,955 on-campus students compared to baseline (Fall 2025) conditions.

Employee growth is anticipated to maintain the current student-to-staff ratio, which reflects established operational standards for delivering academic programs and student services at Mesa College. Approximately 2,745 employees would be required in 2045, representing an increase of 707 employees compared to baseline conditions.

ES.3 Project Summary

ES.3.1 Project Location

Mesa College is centrally located in the Clairemont Mesa community of the City of San Diego (City), which is generally bordered by Interstate (I-) 5 on the west, I-805 on the east, State Route (SR) 52 on the north, and the community of Linda Vista on the south. Clairemont Mesa is a suburban community characterized by single-family homes generally confined to the mesas formed by surrounding canyons and hillsides. The Mesa College campus is located in the southeastern portion of the Clairemont Mesa community, on an approximately 106-acre mesa. It is generally surrounded by a mix of single-family and multi-family residential uses and on two sides by the Tecolote Canyon nature preserve. The campus is generally divided into upper, middle, and lower levels.

The campus currently hosts approximately 50 permanent buildings, containing approximately 1.3 million gross square feet (GSF). Seven temporary classroom buildings are currently located at the southwest corner of Parking Lot 1. The majority of the buildings are clustered on the upper level of the mesa and the mid to lower portions of campus are dedicated to athletic fields, additional instructional buildings, and parking.

ES.3.2 Project Objectives

The fundamental purpose of the CMP is to guide the orderly and coordinated development of the Mesa College campus to achieve District and campus program goals, including the single long-term campus goal to be the leading college of equity and excellence. The following project objectives have been identified for the purposes of CEQA:

1. Provide the facilities and infrastructure needed to accommodate projected enrollment through 2045 and support the campus' goals of quality, equity, and excellence of all programs and services.

2. Maximize efficient use of campus space and increase the capacity of campus buildings to meet anticipated program needs.

3. Increase parking space available on campus to maintain a 1:5 ratio of parking spaces to student enrollment.

4. Ensure student support services and program spaces are logically placed to facilitate connection between related programs and services.

5. Strengthen the campus community beyond the campus core by placing services where students are, distributing parking throughout campus, and increasing visibility of community facilities.

6. Provide clearly defined pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation patterns with enhanced arrival experiences via gateways that lead to easily accessible facilities and parking areas.

7. Enhance campus connectivity for pedestrians, considering both vertical and horizontal movement across campus.

8. Minimize the loss of instructional space and interruptions to campus activities during construction.

9. Incorporate sustainability features in future campus development and programming to align with state climate targets and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office directives related to greenhouse gas emissions reduction, energy efficiency, resource conservation, and green building standards.

ES.3.3 Project Description

The CMP recommends a series of physical improvements across the Mesa College campus. The projects would generally demolish existing aging facilities on the campus and replace them with more modern facilities that accommodate existing programming. The CMP is conceptual in nature and describes potential projects for the campus that would assist Mesa College in meeting its educational and programming goals. Specific project designs, building footprints, architectural details, circulation and parking improvements, infrastructure alignments, and operational characteristics are expected to be refined during future planning and design phases. Based on the concepts presented in the CMP, the improvements total approximately 719,000 GSF of new construction and would require demolition of 172,130 GSF of existing buildings, resulting in a net increase of 546,870 GSF of campus building space. Final project sequencing, timing, and construction phasing would depend on funding availability, operational considerations, and District priorities.

The Athletics Complex project and Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Garage project are anticipated to be designed and constructed in the near term and further detail regarding these projects is available to inform a project-level analysis. Therefore, additional detail regarding these projects is provided below. No specific timing or phasing is identified for the remaining projects or

campus-wide improvements. Specific long-term projects identified for development under the CMP include the following:

- English/English Language Acquisition/Student Resource Center replacement building
- Conference Center
- On-Campus Housing
- High School relocation
- Facilities Services relocation to dedicated area with loading and storage space
- New Welcome Center near eastern entrance
- Child Development Center relocation and expansion
- New Community Clinic
- West Entrance reconfiguration (Genesee Avenue and Marlesta Drive)

Campus-wide improvements related to utility infrastructure and circulation are also part of the CMP and could be implemented in coordination with the projects listed above or undertaken as campus-wide efforts. Interior renovations, continued maintenance, and other minor construction could also occur throughout existing campus buildings.

ES.3.3.1 Near-Term Projects

Athletics Complex

A series of improvements are proposed to replace and reconfigure existing athletic, exercise science, and dance instructional and support spaces to improve connectivity and facility quality. The existing Pool, Upper Athletic Field, gym, and original Exercise Science building (Building L1) would be demolished.

The proposed reconfiguration would place a new three-court gym at the eastern end of the mesa top with two options for hillside extensions along the baseball field and stadium. In addition to court space, the approximately 175,000 GSF complex would include dance studios, athletic training spaces, offices, study areas, locker rooms, team rooms, weight rooms, classrooms, press boxes, ticketing/concessions and restrooms, stadium seating, and equipment storage space. Relocated and expanded pool complex, beach volleyball, softball field, and practice fields are proposed on the west side of the new gym building. These facilities would be accessible via the pedestrian network of pathways across campus. The existing baseball field would also be reconfigured and replaced with artificial turf, remaining generally in its existing location, and the field house located between the baseball field and stadium would be replaced. Lighting is also anticipated to be installed at existing and reconfigured fields to allow evening usage.

Track and field event spaces, including for javelin and hammer throw events, currently located on and adjacent to the Upper Athletic Field are proposed to be relocated to the area east of the stadium where high fencing would be provided to address safety concerns related to pedestrian movement.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

A new multi-story, 140,000-GSF building is proposed on the north side of the mesa top and adjacent to the Student Services Center (Building I4). The building would be constructed along the hillside and would therefore be accessible from both Lot 1 and the mesa level. A large main stage theater would occupy a portion of the building, with ground floor entry available from Lot 1. Theater support spaces would be constructed into the hillside while instructional labs and offices for Administration services would occur on the upper floors and be accessible from the active plaza on the mesa level of campus. Programs in the proposed Performing Arts and Administration Center would be relocated from their location in original campus buildings on the west side of campus, and these buildings would be demolished or re-purposed when future construction in this area occurs.

A multi-story parking structure is proposed adjacent to the Performing Arts and Administration Center on the east. The structure would replace all parking displaced by the construction of the new Performing Arts Center and Administration Building and would similarly be constructed along the hillside, improving access to large events at the Performing Arts and Administration Center and athletic fields.

ES.4 Summary of Environmental Effects and Mitigation Measures

This PEIR examines the potential environmental effects of the proposed CMP, including the near-term projects, considering information related to existing site conditions, analyses of the types and magnitude of individual and cumulative environmental impacts, and feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid potential environmental impacts. Table ES-1, *Summary of Impacts and Mitigation Measures*, provides a summary of the environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the CMP at the program-level and project-level, feasible mitigation measures that would reduce or avoid the significant impacts, and conclusions as to whether the significant impacts have been mitigated below a level of significance. In addition, Table ES-1 provides a summary of cumulative impacts that could result with project implementation. Impacts related to agricultural and forestry resources and mineral resources were determined to not present a potentially significant environmental impact and are discussed further in Section 4.0, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*.

Table ES-1
SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Aesthetics			
Scenic Vistas	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Scenic Resources	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Conflict with Scenic Quality Regulations	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Light and Glare	**Program-Level** Significant (construction) Less than Significant (operation) **Project-Level** Significant (construction) Less than Significant (operation)	**Program-Level** AES-1 Exterior Lighting AES-2 Glare Reduction **Project-Level** AES-1 Exterior Lighting AES-2 Glare Reduction	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
	Cumulative Not cumulatively considerable	**Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Air Quality			
Air Quality Plans	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Air Quality Standards	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Sensitive Receptors	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Odors	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Biological Resources			
Special-Status Species	**Program-Level** Significant	**Program-Level** BIO-1 Sensitive Vegetation Mapping BIO-2 Sensitive Plant Surveys BIO-3 Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys BIO-4 Coastal California Gnatcatcher Habitat Mitigation BIO-5 Raptor Nesting Surveys BIO-6 General Avian Nesting Surveys BIO-7 Pre-Construction Training BIO-8 Construction Staging BIO-9 Construction Fire Prevention BIO-10 Construction Night Lighting BIO-11 Shot Hole Borer Prevention BIO-12 Biological Monitoring BIO-13 Pesticide Management BIO-14 Non-Invasive Landscaping BIO-15 Permanent Lighting BIO-16 MHPA Intrusion Prevention	**Program-Level** Less than Significant
	Project-Level Significant (direct) Less than Significant (indirect)	**Project-Level** BIO-5 Raptor Nesting Surveys BIO-6 General Avian Nesting Surveys	**Project-Level** Less than Significant
	Cumulative Not cumulatively considerable	**Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Sensitive Habitats	**Program-Level** Significant	**Program-Level** BIO-1 Sensitive Vegetation Mapping BIO-17 Sensitive Vegetation Avoidance BIO-18 Compensatory Habitat Mitigation	**Program-Level** Less than Significant
	Project-Level Less than Significant	**Project-Level** No mitigation is required.	**Project-Level** Less than Significant
	Cumulative Not cumulatively considerable	**Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Wetlands	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** BIO-19 Compensatory Wetland Mitigation BIO-20 Jurisdictional Delineation **Project-Level** No mitigation is required. **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Wildlife Corridors	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Local Policies or Ordinances	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Conservation Plans	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Cultural Resources			
Historic Resources	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-level** No Impact **Cumulative** Cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** CUL-1 Project-Level Historic Properties Project Impact Analysis CUL-2 HABS or HALS Documentation for Historic Resources CUL-3 Relocation of a Historical Resource CUL-4 Interpretation/Commemoration of a Historical Resource **Project-level** No mitigation is required. **Cumulative** CUL-1 Project-Level Historic Properties Project Impact Analysis CUL-2 HABS or HALS Documentation for Historic Resources CUL-3 Relocation of a Historical Resource CUL-4 Interpretation/Commemoration of a Historical Resource	**Program-Level** Significant and Unavoidable **Project-level** No Impact **Cumulative** Cumulatively considerable
Archaeological Resources	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** CUL-5 Cultural Resources Monitoring Program **Project-Level** No mitigation is required. **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Human Remains	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** CUL-6 Procedure for Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains **Project-Level** CUL-6 Procedure for Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Energy			
Energy Consumption	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Energy Plans	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Geology and Soils			
Seismic Hazards	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Soil Erosion	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Ground Instability	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Expansive Soil	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Septic Tanks	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Paleontological Resources	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** GEO-1 Initial Project Review GEO-2 Monitoring GEO-3 Treatment of Fossil Discoveries GEO-4 Inadvertent Fossil Discoveries **Project-Level** GEO-1 Initial Project Review GEO-2 Monitoring (if applicable) GEO-3 Treatment of Fossil Discoveries (if applicable) GEO-4 Inadvertent Fossil Discoveries **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Greenhouse Gas Emissions			
Greenhouse Gas Emissions	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Plans	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Hazards and Hazardous Materials			
Transport, Use, Disposal of Hazardous Materials	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Accidental Release of Hazardous Materials	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Hazards to Schools	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Listed Hazardous Materials Sites	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Airport Hazards	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** TRA-1 On-Campus Construction Traffic Management Plan **Project-Level** TRA-1 On-Campus Construction Traffic Management Plan **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Wildland Fires	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Hydrology and Water Quality			
Water Quality Standards	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Groundwater Supplies and Recharge	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Drainage Patterns	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Inundation	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Water Quality and Groundwater Management Plans	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Land Use and Planning			
Community Division	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Land Use Plans, Policies, and Regulations	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** No Impact **Project-Level** No Impact **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Noise			
Increase in Ambient Noise Levels	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** ***Athletics Complex:*** Less than Significant ***Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure:*** Significant (construction) Less than Significant (operation) **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** NOI-1 Construction Noise Screening NOI-2 Stationary Noise Source Assessment **Project-Level** ***Athletics Complex***: No mitigation is required. ***Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure***: NOI-1 Construction Noise Screening **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** ***Athletics Complex***: Less than Significant ***Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure***: Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Ground-Borne Vibration	**Program-Level** Significant (construction) Less than Significant (operation)	**Program-Level** NOI-3 Construction Vibration Screening	**Program-Level** Less than Significant

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
	Project-Level ***Athletics Complex:*** Less than Significant ***Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure:*** Significant (construction) Less than Significant (operation) **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Project-Level** ***Athletics Complex***: No mitigation is required. ***Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure***: NOI-3 Construction Vibration Screening **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Project-Level** ***Athletics Complex***: Less than Significant ***Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure***: Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Airport Noise Exposure	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Population and Housing			
Population Growth	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Housing Displacement	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Public Services			
Fire Protection	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Police Protection	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Schools	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Parks	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Other Public Services	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Recreation			
Use of Existing Recreational Facilities	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Expansion of Recreational Facilities	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Transportation			
Circulation Programs, Plans, Ordinances, and Policies	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Vehicle Miles Traveled	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Hazardous Design Feature	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Emergency Access	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** TRA-1 On-Campus Construction Traffic Management Plan **Project-Level** TRA-1 On-Campus Construction Traffic Management Plan **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Tribal Cultural Resources			
Tribal Cultural Resources	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** CUL-5 Cultural Resources Monitoring Program (in moderate sensitivity areas) CUL-6 Procedure for Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains **Project-Level** CUL-6 Procedure for Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Utilities and Service Systems			
Relocation or Construction of Utilities	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Water Supplies	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Wastewater Treatment	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Solid Waste Generation	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Solid Waste Regulations	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Wildfire			
Emergency Plans	**Program-Level** Significant **Project-Level** Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	**Program-Level** TRA-1 On-Campus Construction Traffic Management Plan **Project-Level** TRA-1 On-Campus Construction Traffic Management Plan **Cumulative** No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

Environmental Topic	Impact Conclusion Prior to Mitigation	Mitigation Measure(s)	Impact Significance After Mitigation
Wildfire Risks	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Infrastructure Installation	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable
Runoff, Post-Fire Slope Instability, or Drainage Risks	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable	No mitigation is required.	**Program-Level** Less than Significant **Project-Level** Less than Significant **Cumulative** Not cumulatively considerable

ES.5 Project Alternatives

The following alternatives are analyzed in detail in Section 6.0, *Project Alternatives*, of this PEIR. The objective of the alternatives analysis is to consider a reasonable range of potentially feasible alternatives to foster informed decision-making and public participation in the environmental review process. The alternatives considered to the proposed project are summarized below, followed by a discussion of the environmentally superior alternative.

ES.5.1 Alternatives Evaluated in Detail

ES.5.1.1 No Project Alternative – Near-Term Projects Only

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires evaluation of a "no project" alternative to consider what would be reasonably expected to occur if the project were not approved. A no project alternative that results in no new campus development is not reasonably foreseeable, in part due to funding obligations for the bonds that have already been sold or are authorized to be sold under Measure HH.

Further, as bond sales authorized by Measure HH have occurred, the District is obligated to use those funds for projects or purposes listed in the Measure HH ballot measure and/or subsequent bond sale. Without additional funding beyond the bond sales authorized by Measure HH, the long-term projects identified in the approved CMP would not be constructed. Therefore, under this alternative, only the near-term projects would be implemented: the Athletics Complex project and the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Garage project. These projects total approximately 315,000 GSF of new construction and 28,577 GSF of demolition, resulting in a net increase of 286,423 GSF of campus building space compared to the net increase of 546,870 GSF anticipated with the project. Under this alternative, only the new parking structure that is part of the near-term project would be constructed.

With this alternative, campus operations would continue as they do under baseline conditions. No new buildings or other improvements planned in the CMP and requiring discretionary approval by the District other than the near-term projects would be constructed. However, minor and ongoing maintenance of existing facilities and infrastructure that do not require District discretion or environmental review could continue. Such projects could involve replacement of broken equipment or features, repainting, or movement of campus functions between existing spaces.

As student growth is anticipated to continue as a result of increases in the regional population and demand for community college courses rather than in connection with upgraded facilities or new programming, the growth in student enrollment considered as part of the project in this PEIR could continue; however, some of this growth may instead be accommodated through online enrollment. Under this alternative, the ability for students to enroll in on-campus courses could be limited by the use of existing facilities, which would remain generally in their existing conditions, and the near-term project facilities.

ES.5.1.2 Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative

The Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would not include alterations to the historical resources on campus identified as having the potential to be affected by future campus projects (refer to Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*). The historical resources include the Fine Arts Building (Building FA), Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2; two buildings), and Mesa College Design Center

Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6; six buildings). Avoidance of impacts to these historic resources would affect the ability to implement the West Entrance project, as removal of Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings would not occur; and the Eastern Housing Option project, which is planned adjacent to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District. This alternative could include redesign of the West Entrance project to avoid removal of the Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings, or exclusion of the West Entrance project as a whole. As the impact of the Eastern Housing Option project would be indirect rather than direct, a project design that retains the integrity of the historic district as a historical resource may also be feasible to retain the purpose of this housing project while avoiding indirect impacts to the historic district. Under this alternative, the total GSF of campus buildings and on-campus student enrollment growth is assumed to remain the same as proposed with the project.

ES.5.1.3 Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative

To avoid impacts to natural resources surrounding the developed portions of campus, this alternative would avoid construction within 100 feet of previously undeveloped land containing natural vegetation communities. Avoidance within this buffer would also avoid areas of moderate archaeological resource sensitivity and the majority of areas of high paleontological resource sensitivity. Compared with the project, this alternative would exclude the West Entrance project and associated signage improvements, as well as modifications and/or bike lanes along the southern loop of Mesa College Drive. Under this alternative, the total GSF of campus buildings and on-campus student enrollment growth is assumed to remain the same as proposed with the project.

ES.5.2 Comparative Environmental Analysis

Detailed analysis of each alternative is provided in Section 6.0, *Project Alternatives*, of this PEIR. Table ES-2, *Comparison of Project and Alternatives Impacts*, provides a comparative summary of the project and alternatives with the purpose of highlighting whether each alternative would result in a similar, greater, or lesser impact than the project.

Table ES-2
COMPARISON OF PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES IMPACTS

Issue Areas with Potential for Significant Impacts under the Project	Comprehensive Master Plan (Project)	Alternatives		
		No Project Alternative (Near-Term Projects Only)	Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative	Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative
Aesthetics				
Light and Glare	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Biological Resources				
Special-Status Species	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM<
Sensitive Habitats	LTSM	LTS<	LTSM=	LTS<
Wetlands	LTSM	LTS<	LTSM=	LTS<
Cultural Resources				
Historic Resources	SU	NI<	LTS<	SU<
Archaeological Resources	LTSM	LTS<	LTSM=	LTS<
Human Remains	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=

Issue Areas with Potential for Significant Impacts under the Project	Comprehensive Master Plan (Project)	Alternatives		
		No Project Alternative (Near-Term Projects Only)	Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative	Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative
Geology and Soils				
Paleontological Resources	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM<
Hazards and Hazardous Materials				
Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Noise				
Increase in Ambient Noise Levels	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Ground-Borne Vibration	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Transportation				
Emergency Access	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Tribal Cultural Resources				
Tribal Cultural Resources	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM<
Wildfire				
Emergency Plans	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=

SU = significant and unavoidable impact; LTSM = less than significant impact with mitigation; LTS = less than significant impact; NI = no impact
< represents reduced impact relative to the project
= represents same/similar impacts relative to the project

ES.5.3 Environmentally Superior Alternative

An EIR is required to identify an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives analyzed. The environmentally superior alternative is typically the alternative having the fewest significant environmental impacts or having the greatest ability to avoid or substantially reduce significant environmental impacts associated with the project. If the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) also requires that the EIR identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.

Based on a comparison of the overall environmental impacts for the described alternatives, the No Project Alternative (near-term projects only) is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The No Project Alternative would eliminate the project's significant and unavoidable impact associated with historic resources. The severity of the impacts that were determined to be less than significant with mitigation under this alternative would be reduced compared to the impacts of the project due to the reduction in construction and development. Out of the nine stated objectives, the No Project Alternative would be able to fulfill two objectives, partially fulfill four objectives, and not fulfill three objectives.

Since the No Project Alternative is selected as the environmentally superior alternative, the PEIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2). Of the remaining alternatives, the environmentally superior alternative would be the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative. Significant and unavoidable impacts associated with historic resources would be avoided while remaining impacts that were determined to be less than significant with mitigation under this alternative would be similar to the impacts of the project. Out of the nine stated objectives, this alternative would be able to fulfill seven objectives, partially fulfill one objective, and not fulfill one objective.

ES.6 Areas of Known Controversy and Issues to be Resolved

CEQA Guidelines Section 15123 requires that an executive summary of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) include areas of controversy known to the Lead Agency, including issues raised by other public agencies and/or the public. A Notice of Preparation (NOP) was circulated to solicit agency and public comments on the scope and content of the environmental analysis with a comment period from December 5, 2025, through January 5, 2026. Comments received during the NOP public scoping period were considered during preparation of this PEIR. Comments addressed topics including cultural resources, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. A copy of the NOP and comments received during the NOP review period are contained in Appendix A to the PEIR.

An EIR is an informational document intended to inform the public agency decision makers and the public of the significant effects of a project, identify possible ways to minimize the significant effects, and describe reasonable alternatives to the project. The issues to be resolved by the decision makers for the proposed project include the choice among alternatives and whether or how to mitigate the significant effects. Table ES-1 identifies potential environmental effects of the proposed CMP at the program-level and project-level as well as feasible mitigation measures that could reduce or avoid the identified environmental impacts. Section ES.5, *Project Alternatives*, above describes potential alternatives to the project that avoid or reduce environmental impacts associated with implementation of the project.

The District Board of Trustees must decide how to reduce significant and unavoidable environmental impacts of the project to the maximum extent feasible while achieving project objectives, through the adoption of mitigation measures and/or alternatives to the project identified in this PEIR. In approving the project or an alternative, the District Board of Trustees would be required to certify the Final PEIR, determine whether and how to mitigate significant impacts, and adopt associated Findings and a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15091 for the significant and unavoidable cultural resources (historic resources) impact identified in the PEIR. In addition, the Board of Trustees must determine if the potentially significant impacts associated with aesthetics, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, noise, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and wildfire have been mitigated below a level of significance. Lastly, the decision makers must determine whether the project alternatives would substantially reduce significant effects while still meeting key objectives of the project.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) has been prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the Mesa College Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP; project) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The CMP proposes a series of physical improvements across the campus that would accommodate anticipated enrollment increases and assist the San Diego Community College District (District) in meeting its educational and programming for Mesa College. Refer to Section 2.0, *Project Description*, for further discussion of the proposed project site and specific project components.

The District serves as the Lead Agency for the Mesa College CMP PEIR. The District is governed by the Board of Trustees, which has the principal responsibility for approving campus planning documents and contracts for construction of new campus development. The purpose, scope, and organization of the PEIR are described below along with an overview of the environmental review process and information on responsible and trustee agencies.

1.1 Purpose of the PEIR

In compliance with CEQA, the purpose of this PEIR is to provide the District Board of Trustees and the general public with information concerning the potential environmental impacts associated with implementation of future projects identified in the CMP. This PEIR assesses impacts that would result from project implementation, presents mitigation measures that would avoid or reduce impacts deemed to be significant, and provides analysis of alternatives that would reduce or avoid significant environmental impacts. The PEIR provides an opportunity to consider both the programmatic effects of the CMP and the project-specific information needed for the District and responsible agencies to consider in issuing permits or approvals required for campus projects. Once certified, this PEIR would serve as the programmatic environmental document for the campus, enabling future projects to tier from the analysis in accordance with CEQA's subsequent review standards.

As a public higher education provider, the District is subject to Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.09, which specifies how CEQA applies to long range development plans and approval of campus projects. According to PRC Section 21080.09:

- A "long range development plan" is defined as a physical development and land use plan to meet the academic and institutional objectives for a particular campus or medical center of public higher education.
- The selection of a location for a particular campus and the approval of a long range development plan are subject to CEQA and require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Environmental effects relating to changes in enrollment levels shall be considered in the EIR, though enrollment or changes in enrollment by themselves do not constitute a project under CEQA.
- Approval of a project on a campus is subject to CEQA but may be addressed in a tiered environmental analysis based on a long range development plan EIR.

Preparation of this PEIR satisfies the requirements of PRC Section 21080.09 for the District to consider the environmental impact of academic and enrollment plans in addition to providing the environmental analysis required by CEQA for physical construction projects anticipated to occur on campus. The Lead Agency (i.e., the District) is required to consider the information in this PEIR, along with other relevant information, in making its decisions on approval of projects implemented under the CMP.

1.2 Scope and Intended Use of the PEIR

The CMP is a planning framework and conceptual land use plan that would guide the physical development of the campus. While it identifies potential projects to be undertaken on campus, it is not an implementation plan and its adoption does not constitute a commitment to specific project designs, construction schedules, or funding priorities. Rather, the CMP describes potential projects for the campus that would assist Mesa College in meeting its educational and programming goals. Except for those projects specifically analyzed at the project level in this PEIR as described below, each development proposal undertaken as part of implementing the CMP must be approved individually at the appropriate level within the District and the approval must comply with CEQA. Therefore, this is a PEIR, as defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15168, that evaluates the effects of implementing the CMP at a program level.

As provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(a), a PEIR may be prepared for a series of actions that can be characterized as one large project and are related geographically, as logical parts in a chain of contemplated actions, in connection with the issuance of plans that govern the conduct of a continuing program, or as activities carried out under the same authority with similar environmental effects. The advantages of a PEIR are described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(b) and include the ability to provide a more exhaustive consideration of project effects, alternatives, and cumulative effects than might be possible in a project-specific EIR; to avoid duplication of basic policy considerations; and to provide the Lead Agency with the ability to consider broad program-wide policies and mitigation measures.

Two projects included in the CMP have identified funding from Measure HH and are in the early stages of the design process. Therefore, in addition to the program-level analysis of implementing the CMP as a whole, this PEIR analyzes these two near-term projects as specific development proposals at the project level. It is intended that the near-term projects would implement applicable mitigation measures identified within the project-level analysis while the program-level analysis and identified mitigation framework would be used for other future projects that require review for consistency with this PEIR. Those future projects considered at the program level may require additional or supplemental environmental review and analysis prior to approval and implementation in accordance with PRC Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 through 15164 and 15168.

1.3 Organization of the PEIR

This PEIR contains the information required to be included in an EIR by CEQA Guidelines Sections 15122 through 15131. In summary, the content and format of this PEIR are as follows:

- **Executive Summary.** Summarizes the proposed project, impacts of the project, proposed mitigation measures, alternatives considered and their resulting impacts, and issues to be resolved by the Board of Trustees.

- **Section 1.0, Introduction.** Provides an overview of the purpose, scope, and organization of the PEIR; the environmental review process; and information for responsible and trustee agencies.

- **Section 2.0, Project Description.** Includes a detailed discussion of the proposed project, including project objectives, anticipated growth, project characteristics, anticipated construction activities, and a description of future implementation actions.

- **Section 3.0, Environmental Analysis.** Contains the analysis of project effects to each environmental issue area, including a description of the existing setting, an overview of applicable regulations, the thresholds of significance, environmental impact analysis, and proposed mitigation measures, where applicable. The impact analysis in each environmental issue section is provided at the program-level for the CMP, at the project-level for the near-term projects, and for cumulative development.

- **Section 4.0, Effects Found Not to be Significant.** Provides a discussion of the potential environmental effects found not to be significant during initial scoping for the PEIR and briefly describes why those impacts would not be significant and, therefore, do not require a detailed evaluation in this PEIR. This section fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines 15128. Other effects found not to be significant are summarized in the applicable portions of Section 3.0.

- **Section 5.0, Other CEQA Considerations.** Provides discussion of additional topics required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126, including significant and unavoidable impacts, significant and irreversible effects, and growth-inducing effects.

- **Section 6.0, Project Alternatives.** Describes and evaluates alternatives to the proposed project that could reduce or avoid its significant environmental effects in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6.

- **Section 7.0, PEIR Preparers.** Identifies the persons who authored or participated in preparing this PEIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15129.

- **Section 8.0, References.** Provides a list of reference materials used in preparation of this PEIR.

Technical studies supporting the analysis in this PEIR are summarized in the relevant portions of Section 3 and are appended in full to the PEIR, as follows:

- Appendix A – Notice of Preparation
- Appendix B – Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report
- Appendix C – Biological Resources Technical Report
- Appendix D – Archaeological Technical Report
- Appendix E – Historic Resources Survey Report
- Appendix F – Geology and Soils Technical Study
- Appendix G – Paleontological Resources Technical Report
- Appendix H – Noise Technical Report
- Appendix I – Vehicle Miles Traveled Analysis

1.4 Environmental Review Process

1.4.1 Notice of Preparation

In response to its decision to prepare a PEIR, District staff prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP) in compliance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082 soliciting input on the scope and contents of the PEIR. The NOP was mailed to a distribution list consisting of relevant local agencies and submitted to the State Clearinghouse (SCH) for distribution to responsible, trustee, and other relevant state agencies. The NOP was also published in the San Diego Union Tribune newspaper and was made available electronically on the District Planning, Design, and Construction website. The 30-day comment period on the NOP commenced on December 5, 2025 and concluded on January 5, 2026. The NOP is provided in Appendix A of this PEIR, along with written comments received during the scoping period.

The District received two comment letters during the 30-day NOP comment period (Appendix A): one from the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) and one from the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). The comment letter from the NAHC provided general information regarding the CEQA process, Assembly Bill (AB) 52, and Senate Bill (SB) 18, as well as NAHC recommendations regarding cultural resource assessments. The Caltrans comment letter noted that a Traffic Impact Study should be provided, outlined strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and described Caltrans policies related to safety, complete streets, hydrology, and other review procedures that may apply to activities within Caltrans' right-of-way (ROW) as part of encroachment permit approval. Comments received during the scoping process have been taken into consideration during the preparation of this PEIR. Specific information related to the topics raised in these comments is provided in Sections 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, 3.15, *Transportation*, and 3.16, *Tribal Cultural Resources*.

1.4.2 Public Review of the Draft PEIR

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15105, the Draft PEIR will be available for review and comment by the public and public agencies for a period of 45 days. The Notice of Availability for the Draft PEIR has been distributed in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15087. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to provide comments to the District on the analysis and content of the Draft PEIR. Public review of the Draft PEIR 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" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15204).

Electronic comments are preferred and can be sent via email to SDCCDMeasureHH@sdccd.edu with "Draft PEIR Comments for Mesa College CMP" in the subject line. Electronic comments are preferred; however, written comments may also be submitted by mail to the following address, provided they are postmarked no later than the close of the public review period:

San Diego Community College District
Attn: Mesa College CMP
1450 Frazee Road, Suite 500
San Diego, California 92108

The Draft PEIR and related technical studies are available for review during the public review period on the District's Planning, Design, and Construction website under the heading "Environmental Notices" at: https://www.sdccd.edu/departments/operations/construction/index.aspx.

Physical copies of the Draft PEIR are available for review at the following locations during typical hours of operation:

- District Planning, Design, and Construction Office: 1450 Frazee Road, Suite 500, San Diego, California 92108
- Mesa College Library: Learning Resource Center (LRC), 7250 Mesa College Drive, San Diego, California 92111
- Linda Vista Branch Library: 2160 Ulric St, San Diego, California 92111

1.4.3 Publication of the Final PEIR

Following the public review period, the District, as Lead Agency, will provide responses to comments received on the Draft PEIR raising significant environmental issues per CEQA Guidelines Section 15088. Detailed responses to the comments received during public review will be provided in the Final PEIR along with a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. Findings of Fact and a Statement of Overriding Considerations for impacts identified in the Draft PEIR as significant and unmitigable will also be prepared as part of the PEIR finalization process.

The culmination of the environmental review process will be a public hearing on the proposed CMP and its Final PEIR. The Final PEIR will need to be certified by the District Board of Trustees as having been prepared in compliance with CEQA prior to making decisions related to the projects included in the CMP. As the CMP and individual projects are approved, the District Board of Trustees will also adopt all feasible mitigation measures identified in the PEIR and apply them as conditions of project approval.

A Lead Agency must file a Notice of Determination (NOD) with the County Clerk and SCH within five working days after approval of a project for which an EIR is prepared (PRC Section 21152). The NOD must be posted for 30 days and retained by the Lead Agency for 12 months. Posting of the NOD starts a 30-day statute of limitations on CEQA legal challenges (PRC Section 21167[c]).

1.5 Responsible and Trustee Agencies

Under CEQA, state and local agencies other than the Lead Agency that have discretionary authority over a project, or aspects of a project, are considered responsible agencies. Federal agencies are not responsible agencies under CEQA. A trustee agency is a state agency that has jurisdiction by law over natural resources that are held in trust for the people of the State of California and would be affected by a project. The analysis and findings in this PEIR reflect the independent judgment of the District as the Lead Agency for the project; however, responsible and trustee agencies may use this PEIR to fulfill their environmental review obligations under CEQA when issuing permits or other approvals for the project.

No other public agency has discretionary authority over the CMP; however, some future projects implemented under the CMP may require discretionary approval from other public agencies. Other state and local public agencies that may have discretionary authority over future projects could include the City of San Diego (City), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Caltrans, San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD), and San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

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2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Background

The San Diego Community College District is a community college district serving the City of San Diego (City) in central San Diego County (County). The District includes three credit colleges (San Diego City College, Mesa College, and Miramar College) and the state's only free-standing noncredit college (San Diego College of Continuing Education). The District is the third largest public community college district in California, serving approximately 90,000 students annually across these colleges.

Mesa College is a public, accredited, and comprehensive community college. Mesa College is the largest college in the District and offers more than 195 associate degree and certificate programs from its seven schools: Arts and Languages; Business Technology; Health Sciences and Public Service; Humanities; Mathematics and Natural Sciences; Exercise Science, Health Education, and Athletics; Social/Behavioral Sciences and Multicultural Studies. The campus' Student Services programs promote student learning, achievement, and engagement by providing services directly or by connecting students to associated resources. A total of 24 Student Services are organized into three schools: Student Affairs, Student Development, and Student Success and Equity.

2.1.1 Mesa2030 Comprehensive Master Plan Overview

The CMP, approved by the District Board of Trustees on May 13, 2021, is the ten-year educational and facilities master plan for Mesa College. This document includes an analysis of Mesa College's effectiveness in meeting its mission, projected demographics and economic changes, and feedback from internal and external campus communities. This information provides for the development of two long-term guides for future decisions: Mesa2030 Goals and Facilities Planning Principles. Based on the guiding goals and principles, Chapter 5 of the CMP describes a series of site improvement and facility projects for the campus. The designs and concepts presented in the CMP are conceptual and intended to serve as a framework for the future detailed design of campus improvements as funding becomes available.

2.1.2 Measure HH Funding

On November 5, 2024, San Diego voters approved Measure HH, authorizing the District to issue $3.5 billion in bonds for District facility upgrades. Based on the campus facility needs and potential improvements described in the master plan for each District campus, certain projects have been prioritized to move forward with initial funding from Measure HH bond sales. Two of these projects would be constructed at Mesa College. Future bond sales authorized by Measure HH would fund additional improvements described in the CMP as well as the master plans for the other District campuses.

2.1.3 Campus Population Growth

The CMP establishes planning assumptions for future campus development based on projected enrollment and staffing needs. While the CMP identifies maximum enrollment of up to 25,000 students based on enrollment projections first established in 2005, current enrollment and historic growth rates from 1973 through 2023 (approximately 1.4 percent per year on average; District 2024) do not demonstrate that reaching enrollment of 25,000 on-campus students is reasonably foreseeable within

the next 20 years. This is particularly true as the addition of more online and hybrid course offerings in recent years has decreased the number of students who enroll in on-site courses. As of Fall 2025, 11,403 students were enrolled in on-site courses at Mesa College. An additional 16,518 students were enrolled in either off-site programs (i.e., high school courses receiving District credits) or online courses. Students participating in off-site and online courses register online; some students may visit the campus one to two times per semester, typically prior to on-campus courses starting and outside of peak on-campus hours. As these students do not regularly attend the physical Mesa College campus, use campus facilities, or generate daily trips to campus, their enrollment does not contribute to campuswide operational impacts. Accordingly, under CEQA, these activities do not result in a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment and are not analyzed further. Thus, the environmental analysis in this PEIR focuses on the on-campus student population.

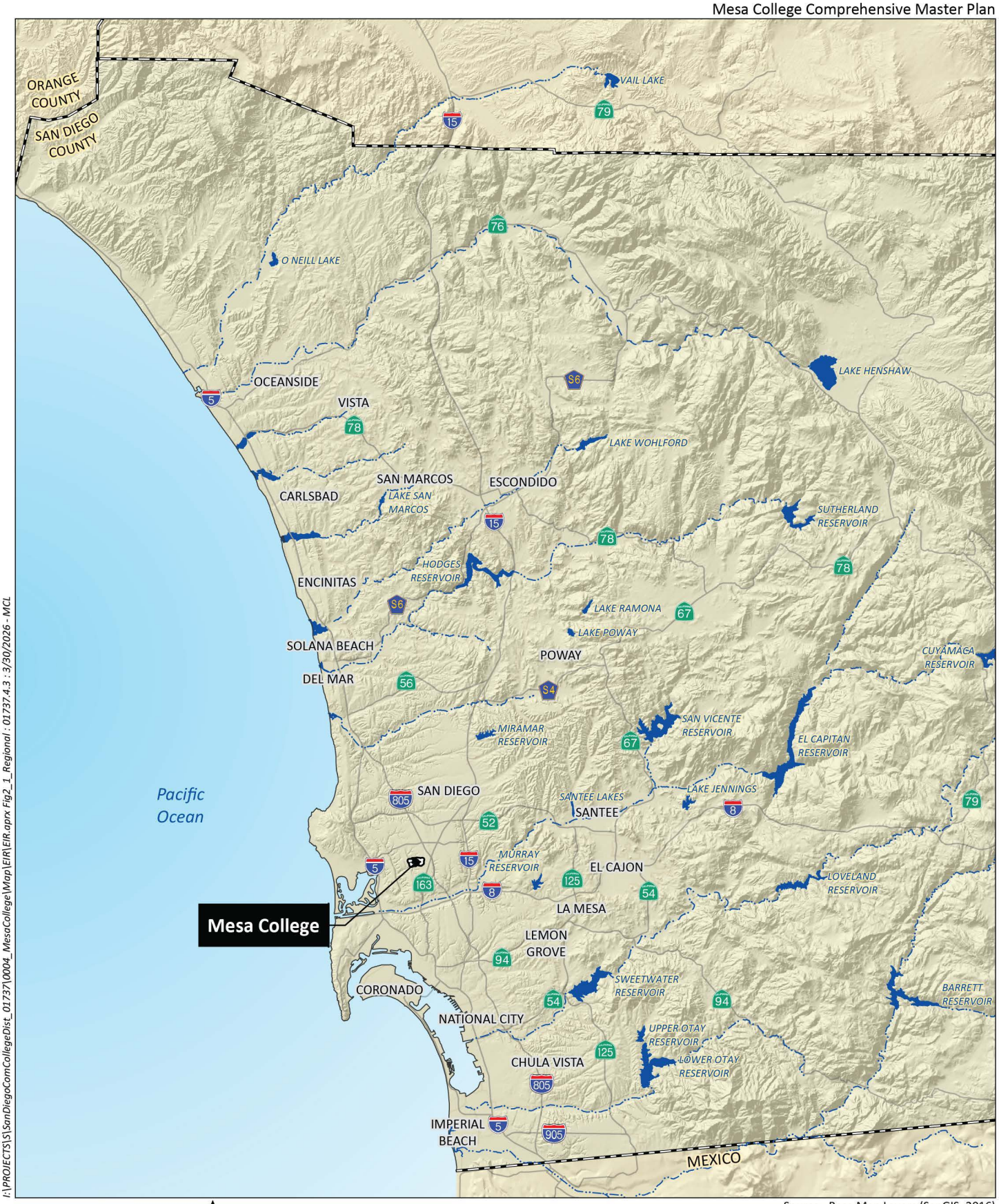
Although historic enrollment growth at the campus has averaged approximately 1.4 percent per year, this rate may not fully reflect future conditions. For purposes of this PEIR, a 1.5 percent annual growth rate has been selected to ensure that the environmental analysis accounts for reasonably foreseeable changes in enrollment and campus development over the next 20 years. This growth rate reflects the potential for attracting and accommodating additional students in on-campus courses through implementation of planned improvements to campus facilities, academic offerings, and student services, while also providing a conservative approach for environmental analysis and ensuring that the PEIR addresses potential impacts associated with continued on-campus enrollment growth. Applying an annual on-campus population growth rate of 1.5 percent, 15,358 on-campus students are anticipated to attend Mesa College in 2045, an increase of 3,955 on-campus students compared to baseline (Fall 2025) conditions.

Employee growth is anticipated to maintain the current student-to-staff ratio, which reflects established operational standards for delivering academic programs and student services at Mesa College. There were 2,038 total Mesa College employees in July 2025 (District 2025). Assuming a proportional number of employees is required to serve the future student population, approximately 2,745 employees would be required in 2045. This represents an increase of 707 employees compared to baseline conditions.

2.2 Project Location and Setting

Mesa College is centrally located within the District in the Clairemont Mesa community of the City, which is generally bordered by Interstate (I-) 5 on the west, I-805 on the east, State Route (SR) 52 on the north, and the community of Linda Vista on the south. Refer to Figure 2-1, *Regional Location*. Clairemont Mesa is a suburban community characterized by single-family homes generally confined to the mesas formed by surrounding canyons and hillsides. The Mesa College campus is located in the southeastern portion of the Clairemont Mesa community, on an approximately 106-acre mesa. It is generally surrounded by a mix of single-family and multi-family residential uses and on two sides by the Tecolote Canyon nature preserve. The campus is generally divided into upper, mid, and lower levels. Refer to Figure 2-2, *Aerial Photograph*.

The campus currently hosts approximately 50 permanent buildings, containing approximately 1.3 million gross square feet (GSF) and 590,000 assignable square feet. Three 960-GSF temporary classroom buildings are currently located at the southwest corner of Parking Lot 1. The majority of the buildings are clustered on the upper level of the mesa and the mid to lower portions of campus are dedicated to athletic fields, additional instructional buildings, and parking. Refer to Figure 2-3, *Existing Campus Facilities*.



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0 8 Miles

Source: Base Map Layers (SanGIS, 2016)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Regional Location

Figure 2-1



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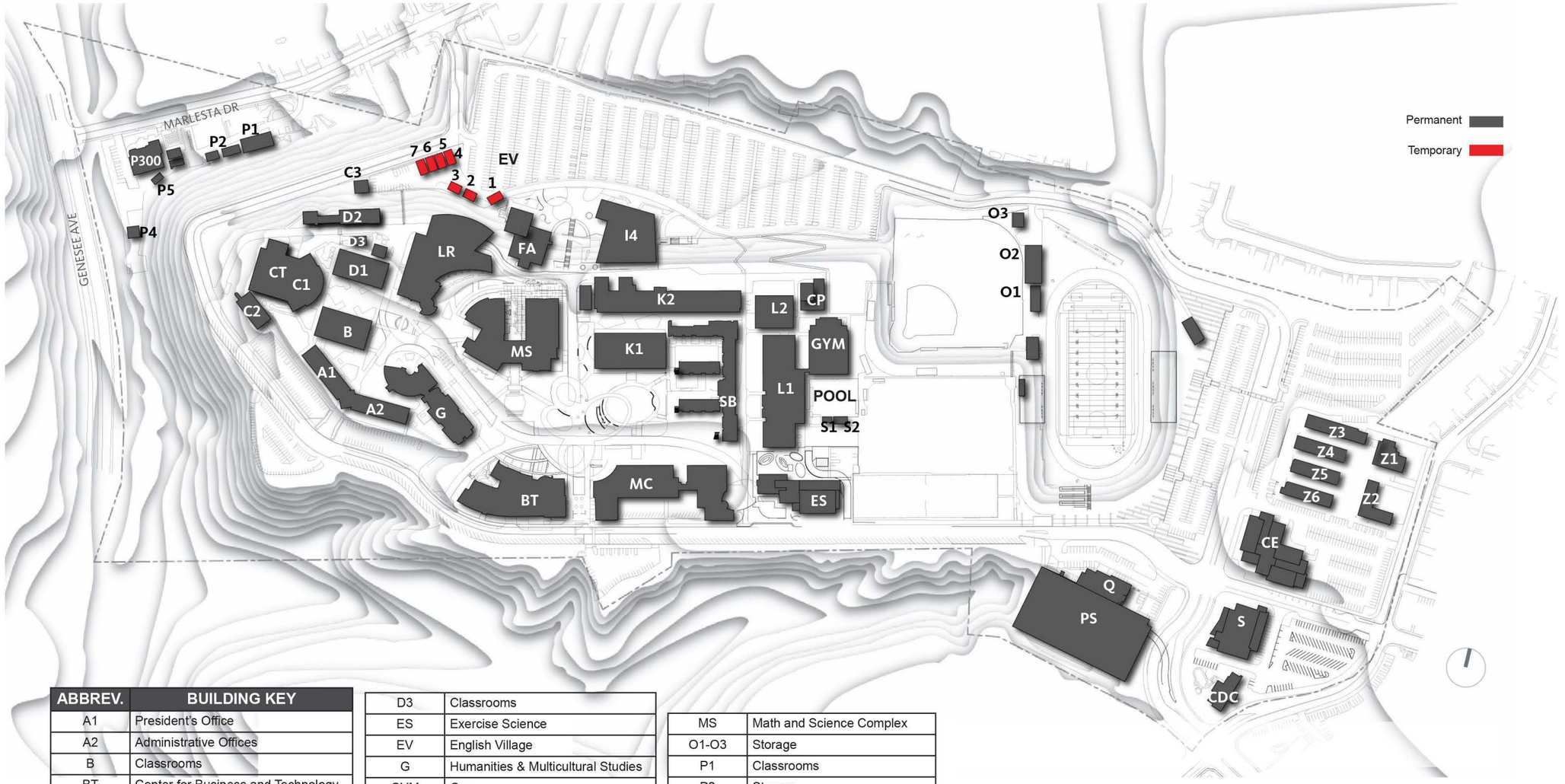
0 500 Feet

Source: Aerial (SanGIS 2023)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Aerial Photograph

Figure 2-2



ABBREV.	BUILDING KEY
A1	President's Office
A2	Administrative Offices
B	Classrooms
BT	Center for Business and Technology
C1-CT	Classrooms and Apolliad Theatre
C2	Classrooms
C3	Storage
CDC	Child Development Center
CE	Continuing Education Building
CP	Central Plant
D1	VRC,NextUP, Honors
D2	Fermentation

D3	Classrooms
ES	Exercise Science
EV	English Village
G	Humanities & Multicultural Studies
GYM	Gym
FA	Fine Arts
I4	Student Services Center
L1	Exercise Science
L2	Facilities
LR	Learning Resource Center
K1	Classrooms
K2	Met High School
MC	Mesa Commons

MS	Math and Science Complex
O1-O3	Storage
P1	Classrooms
P2	Storage
P300	Animal Health Technology
P4-P5	Animal Health
PS	Parking Structure
Q	Mesa College Police Offices
S	Allied Health Education
S1-S2	Pool Equipment / Storage
SB	Social and Behavioral Sciences
Z1-Z6	Design Center

Source: SD Mesa Collge 2025

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The campus has two entry points: the main entry on the east, accessible via Mesa College Drive, and the secondary entry on the west, at the intersection of Marlesta Drive and Chasewood Way. A two-way loop road circles the campus and connects to all parking areas, which contain a total of 3,835 parking spaces.

2.3 Project Objectives

The fundamental purpose of the CMP is to guide the orderly and coordinated development of the Mesa College campus to achieve District and campus program goals, including the single long-term campus goal to be the leading college of equity and excellence. The following project objectives have been identified for the purposes of CEQA:

1. Provide the facilities and infrastructure needed to accommodate projected enrollment through 2045 and support the campus' goals of quality, equity, and excellence of all programs and services.

2. Maximize efficient use of campus space and increase the capacity of campus buildings to meet anticipated program needs.

3. Increase parking space available on campus to maintain a 1:5 ratio of parking spaces to student enrollment.

4. Ensure student support services and program spaces are logically placed to facilitate connection between related programs and services.

5. Strengthen the campus community beyond the campus core by placing services where students are, distributing parking throughout campus, and increasing visibility of community facilities.

6. Provide clearly defined pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation patterns with enhanced arrival experiences via gateways that lead to easily accessible facilities and parking areas.

7. Enhance campus connectivity for pedestrians, considering both vertical and horizontal movement across campus.

8. Minimize the loss of instructional space and interruptions to campus activities during construction.

9. Incorporate sustainability features in future campus development and programming to align with state climate targets and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office directives related to greenhouse gas emissions reduction, energy efficiency, resource conservation, and green building standards.

2.4 Project Components

The CMP is a planning framework and conceptual land use plan that guides campus development. It identifies potential projects to support Mesa College's educational and programming goals but does not commit the District to specific project designs, construction schedules, or funding priorities. Specific project designs, building footprints, architectural details, circulation and parking improvements, infrastructure alignments, and operational characteristics would be refined during future planning and design phases, along with final programming, departmental assignments, and internal space allocations.

Based on the concepts presented in the CMP, the following sections describe potential campus-wide improvements, near-term projects, and long-term projects. Adjustments to the specific details of the projects described below are anticipated to occur throughout future planning and design phases of individual development projects. These projects would remain within the scope of the project covered by the PEIR provided such refinements remain within the general development envelope and land use assumptions evaluated in this PEIR. References to the "program-level" components and associated analyses refer to the CMP as a whole, including campus-wide improvements, near-term and long-term projects, and potential on-campus enrollment growth. References to the "project-level" components and analyses refer to the two near-term projects described in Section 2.4.3 below.

2.4.1 Master Plan Overview

Based on current campus challenges and anticipated growth, the CMP recommends a series of improvements across the Mesa College campus. Figure 2-4, *Comprehensive Master Plan Facility Overview*, provides an overview of the anticipated locations for proposed facilities discussed further below. The campus is generally assigned the zoning designations of Instructional, Student Support, Athletics, and Parking, though these categories are intentionally broad to allow for mixing of uses to best serve campus populations.

In addition to the projected student growth rate, facilities planning is based on the unique space needs of the programs that are lacking space or are most likely to grow. The CMP space program identifies lab, instructional media, and other categories of building space as most lacking for Mesa College. As noted above, the CMP is conceptual in nature and future refinements to exact building designs would occur during future project planning and implementation phases. The improvements described below total approximately 719,000 GSF of new construction and would require demolition of 172,130 GSF of existing buildings, resulting in a net increase of 546,870 GSF of campus building space. While recommendations are described individually in the following sections to fulfill campus needs, the intention of the CMP is to develop a campus that works holistically and seamlessly to achieve campus goals. The exact architectural programming and design of each project would be developed during project implementation in coordination with user groups.

While the CMP discusses a 10-year planning horizon for Mesa College, it is not anticipated that all improvements recommended in the CMP would be constructed within this time period. Section 2.4.3 below describes projects from the CMP that are anticipated to be constructed in the near term as they have identified funding and are in the design process. No specific timing or phasing is identified for the remaining campus-wide improvements and long-term projects described in Sections 2.4.2 and 2.4.4, respectively. These improvements would be designed and implemented as funding is available and program needs are reprioritized.

2.4.2 Campus-Wide Improvements

The CMP identifies categories of campus-wide projects that would improve circulation and utilities across campus consistent with the vision of the CMP. These improvements could be incorporated into specific projects or as holistic campus improvement programs.

Related to utilities, campus-wide infrastructure improvements may include replacement, relocation, or upgrade of existing utility, drainage, circulation, accessibility, safety, and technology systems to support future campus development, primarily with construction of new facilities. As part of the campus goals to

EXISTING
NEW CONSTRUCTION
OPTIONS
MARLESTA DR
GENESEE AVE
P300
P5
P4
PARKING STRUCTURE
HOUSING OPTION
LR
FA
I4
PERFORMING ARTS / ADMIN
PARKING STRUCTURE
BASEBALL
CP
MS
ENGLISH / ELAC / STUDENT RESOURCE CENTER
PRACTICE FIELD
STUDIOS + SUPPORT OPTION
STADIUM
HIGH SCHOOL
HOUSING OPTION
FACILITIES
CONFERENCE CENTER
G
SB
SOFTBALL
SUPP
POOL
VOLLEYBALL
GYM
MESA COLLEGE CIRCLE
Z3
Z4
Z5
Z6
Z1
Z2
BT
MC
ES
TENNIS
STUDIOS + SUPPORT OPTION
WELCOME CENTER
CE
Q
PS
S
CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER
COMMUNITY CLINIC
MESA COLLEGE CIRCLE

I:\PROJECTS\S\SanDiegoComCollegeDist_0173710004_MesaCollege\Map\EIR\Fig2_4_ProjSitePlan.indd 01737:4 03/30/2026 - MCL

Source: Gensler 2025

HELIX Environmental Planning

Comprehensive Master Plan Facility Overview

Figure 2-4

become more sustainable, ongoing improvements would occur for water demand efficiency, waste management, power generation, telecommunication infrastructure, and outdoor lighting.

Circulation improvements across campus would include pedestrian connections, bicycle paths, ride share drop off areas, and bus stops. Roadway improvements to add a bike path and parking along the southern loop of Mesa College Circle are anticipated. New campus signage, art, and wayfinding signage could also be incorporated across the campus. In addition to the specific parking structure improvements described below, campus parking improvements may also include new or adjusted surface parking facilities intended to support campus operations and evolving transportation needs. Final parking counts and configurations, or re-configurations necessitated by development projects, would be determined during future project design and implementation.

In addition to new building projects highlighted in the CMP, faculty and staff identified existing buildings during the planning process that do not meet current needs. The majority of original campus buildings constructed in the 1960s through 1980s would have very high renovation costs to meet current program needs, accessibility, and building standards and are therefore anticipated to be demolished rather than undergoing renovation or reutilization. Newer campus buildings, on the other hand, are considered for minor interior renovations and technical upgrades that would support current programming needs. Renewal and reinvestment activities are anticipated to include interior renovations to accommodate programming adjustments, upgrade building finishes (e.g., flooring, paint, roofing), enhance technology, upgrade mechanical systems (e.g., heating, ventilation, and air conditioning [HVAC] systems), or improve building accessibility. Minor exterior construction could also occur to repurpose existing exterior areas for outdoor classrooms, study areas, or leisure seating.

2.4.3 Near-Term Projects

The Athletics Complex and the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure projects described below are anticipated to be constructed in the near term as they have identified funding and are in the design process. These two projects are collectively considered the “project-level” components and analyzed in more detail throughout the PEIR. Refer to Section 3.0, *Environmental Analysis*, for further detail.

2.4.3.1 Athletics Complex

A series of improvements are proposed to replace and reconfigure existing athletic, exercise science, and dance instructional and support spaces to improve connectivity and facility quality. The existing Pool, Upper Athletic Field, 16,022-GSF gym, and the original 28,577-GSF Exercise Science building (Building L1) would be demolished.

The proposed reconfiguration would place a new three-court gym at the eastern end of the mesa top with two options for hillside extensions along the baseball field and stadium. In addition to court space, the approximately 175,000-GSF complex would include dance studios, athletic training spaces, offices, study areas, locker rooms, team rooms, weight rooms, classrooms, press boxes, ticketing/concessions and restrooms, stadium seating, and equipment storage space. Relocated and expanded pool complex, beach volleyball, softball field, and practice fields are proposed on the west side of the new gym building. These facilities would be accessible via the pedestrian network of pathways across campus. The existing baseball field would also be reconfigured and replaced with artificial turf, remaining generally in its existing location, and the field house located between the baseball field and stadium would be

replaced. Lighting is also anticipated to be installed at existing and reconfigured fields to allow evening usage.

Track and field event spaces, including for javelin and hammer throw events, currently located on and adjacent to the Upper Athletic Field are proposed to be relocated to the area east of the stadium where high fencing would be provided to address safety concerns related to pedestrian movement.

2.4.3.2 Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

A new multi-story, 140,000-GSF building is proposed on the north side of the mesa top and adjacent to the Student Services Center (Building I4). The building would be constructed into the hillside and would therefore be accessible from both Lot 1 and the mesa level. A large main stage theater would occupy a portion of the building, with ground floor entry available from Lot 1. Theater support spaces would be constructed into the hillside while instructional labs and offices for Administration services would occur on the upper floors and be accessible from the active plaza on the mesa level of campus. Programs in the proposed Performing Arts and Administration Center would be relocated from their location in original campus buildings on the west side of campus, and these buildings would be demolished or re-purposed when construction occurs for the Conference Center, described in Section 2.4.4.2, and if the Western Housing/Parking Structure Option described in Section 2.4.4.3 is selected.

A multi-story parking structure is proposed adjacent to the Performing Arts and Administration Center on the east. The structure would replace all parking displaced by the construction of the new Performing Arts Center and Administration Building and would similarly be constructed into the hillside, improving access to large events at the Performing Arts and Administration Center and athletic fields.

2.4.4 Long-Term Projects

2.4.4.1 English/ELAC/Student Resource Center

The English/English Language Acquisition (ELAC)/Student Resource Center building is proposed to replace functions currently located in aging or temporary facilities with a new, approximately 50,000-GSF, multi-story building in a centralized campus location. This would require demolition of the existing 22,671-GSF Building K1, which contains classrooms, and 25,701-SF Met High School building (Building K2). Refer to Section 2.4.4.4 below for discussion of the proposed high school relocation.

The building would occupy a prominent location within the campus core, with the Student Services Center (Building I4) to the north and the Quad and Mesa Commons (Building MC) to the south. The Student Resource Center would be located on the first floor, providing increased visibility for student services, including The Stand, FAST, Honors Center, Veterans Center, LGBTQ Center, Women's Center, and Black Student Union. A portion of the ground floor would be open space to support movement through and around the first-floor functions as well as provide a connection from the Quad on the south to an active plaza on the north. The upper floors of the new building would provide instructional space to support the English and ELAC programs, which would be relocated from the temporary classrooms located adjacent to Parking Lot 1.

2.4.4.2 Conference Center

A new 14,000-GSF Conference Center is proposed to replace the existing 12,824-GSF President's Office (Building A1) and Administrative Offices (Building A2) on the west side of campus. The new facility would

provide large meeting and conference spaces to support campus needs and host larger community events. In addition, the facility may be designed to support the growing Fermentation program currently contained in Building D2. With implementation of the West Quad described in Section 2.4.4.3 below, the Conference Center would open to the new West Quad open space.

2.4.4.3 Western Housing/Parking Structure Options

Following the relocation of functions into the new Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure (refer to Section 2.4.3.2), the original campus buildings (B, CT/C1, C2, C3, D1, D2, D3) totaling 61,937 GSF on the west side of campus would be demolished when new development in this area is proposed. A portion of this site could be redeveloped with a student housing complex. The student housing building(s) would be oriented around open space to create a new West Quad. The capacity of a potential student housing building is unknown at this time. Where required for analysis in the PEIR, it is assumed the student housing project would be of a similar scale to that proposed at City College, which contains 797 beds in a 262,264-GSF building with study areas, student resource offices, a café, and other amenity areas. A total of 800 beds within a 265,000-GSF building is assumed for student housing at Mesa College, to be developed at either the above-described location on the west side of campus or on the eastern end of campus as described under the Eastern Housing Option in Section 2.4.4.5, below.

In addition to student housing, the relocated programs and demolished buildings would allow space for a second multi-story parking structure location option. This location would be close to the new west entry and constructed into the hillside.

2.4.4.4 High School

The existing 25,701-GSF Met High School building (Building K2) would be demolished as described in Section 2.4.4.1 above and the High School would be relocated to the northern portion of existing Lot 3. No change in the capacity of the school would occur. For the purpose of this PEIR, it is assumed that the new High School building would total 26,000 GSF. The new location would improve access with a location adjacent to the east campus gateway and near parking, and also provide separation from main campus areas for high school students while still being part of the larger Mesa College community.

2.4.4.5 Eastern Housing Option

A second location option for the proposed student housing is identified on the eastern end of campus, within existing Lot 2. To replace parking spaces lost with the redevelopment of Lot 2, the student housing would be constructed with ground-level parking below a courtyard, with residential units surrounding this courtyard area. As described above for the western housing option, the capacity of student housing for the purpose of this PEIR is based on the similar building at City College. Student housing is anticipated in only one of these two campus locations.

2.4.4.6 Facilities Services Building

A new location for Facilities Services is proposed in the northeast corner of the campus on a portion of existing Lot 2. The new location would both clear space in the campus core and improve vehicular access for deliveries. The new Facilities Services area would include a new building (assumed to be up to 11,000 GSF) and a secure exterior space for receiving/loading and operation yards.

2.4.4.7 Welcome Center

A new 12,000-GSF Welcome Center is proposed on the southern portion of existing Lot 2, providing student services in a prominent location adjacent to the east entry. The new Welcome Center would include visitor information as well as services for students, faculty, and staff. A new gateway monument is proposed at the Mesa College Drive/Armstrong Place intersection, just south of the proposed Community Clinic, to signal campus entry at the east gateway.

2.4.4.8 Child Development Center

The Child Development Center at Mesa College provides childcare services for preschool-aged children while serving as training facilities for college students. The existing 4,398-GSF Child Development Center (Building CDC) is proposed for demolition while a new 12,000-GSF facility with an outdoor play area is proposed to address current support program needs. The new building is proposed just northeast of the existing building, within existing Lot 5. While some parking spaces would be removed to accommodate the proposed building, parking would remain surrounding the building. The proposed location, adjacent to the Allied Health Education building (Building S) and Continuing Education Building (Building CE), would improve opportunities for collaboration with the Allied Health and Continuing Education programs.

2.4.4.9 Community Clinic

A new Community Clinic is proposed near the existing main entry on the east. The Community Clinic would replace the existing 4,398-GSF Child Development Center (Building CDC) and a new Child Development Center would be constructed on existing Lot 5 as described in Section 2.4.4.8 above. The Community Clinic would primarily serve members of the campus community with low-cost or no-cost health services, while providing students in the Allied Health program with an on-campus location to fulfill requirements for clinical experience. The building is estimated to be approximately 14,000 GSF.

2.4.4.10 West Entrance

A reconfigured west entrance to Mesa College, centered at the intersection of Genesee Avenue and Marlesta Drive, is proposed with the intent to alleviate congestion in adjacent neighborhoods, create a welcoming entry experience with improved wayfinding signage, and increase the visibility of Mesa College within the community. New monument signage and landscape improvements are proposed at the intersection of Genesee Avenue and Marlesta Drive.

The existing driveway to the campus garden, approximately 650 feet east of Genesee Avenue, would become the entrance to campus from Marlesta Drive, thereby eliminating the existing vehicular access at Chasewood Way. An access road would be extended from the existing driveway up to the mesa, providing vehicular access to the perimeter road and proposed parking structure.

2.4.5 Development Characteristics

Pursuant to Government Code Section 53094, local City zoning and development regulations are not applicable to community college projects that enhance the District's ability to provide classroom education. As such, the CMP provides the applicable land use guidance for development within the Mesa College campus.

The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual provides District policy for design professionals and construction teams during the planning and design phases of renovation and construction projects in the District. It outlines design approach, space allocation, physical environment, materials, and system requirements. Building design and construction requirements of the California Building Code (CBC) apply to development in the District and are referenced throughout the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. Proposed variations to the District Guidelines and Standards are required to be submitted in writing to the District Architect for review and written approval prior to depicting such variations in design documents.

2.4.5.1 Sustainability Features

The Design Guidelines and Standards Manual provides District sustainability levels that are designed to recognize, measure, and promote sustainable practices across District campuses and facilities. All District projects, including new construction, major renovations, and modernization efforts, are required to incorporate the principles outlined in the sustainability levels and meet applicable local, state, and District-adopted sustainability policies. The Design Guidelines and Standards Manual provides a tiered rating system that encourages environmentally responsible design, construction, and operations, across the following categories: integrated project design, climate resilience, energy and carbon performance, water conservation and management, materials and waste, indoor environmental quality and wellness, community engagement and learning, and innovation. Based on the points accumulated in each of these categories, projects and buildings earn a District sustainability rating.

In addition to the rating system for individual projects, some District-adopted sustainability standards apply to campus-wide development. These include requirements for each campus to facilitate and maintain an ongoing waste recycling program, use renewable woods, use low-emitting carpet cushion materials and backing certified by the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Plus Program, and incorporate District Facilities Services program of green cleaning materials and techniques.

2.5 Master Plan Implementation

The CMP is a plan to guide campus development; however, it is not an implementation plan. Development projects would be brought forward individually to implement the CMP over time, and although the CMP and environmental analysis in this PEIR make informed estimations on the size and timing of potential future projects, these details may shift over time due to changes in resources and campus priorities. Each future campus development process would be required to undergo the District's project development process.

As project concepts envisioned in the CMP are prioritized and funded, further refinement of the plans occurs through the schematic design, design development, and construction document processes. Input gathered from campus users is considered in developing the proposed programming included in these plans. Utility demands are projected during project design to confirm that existing utility capacity is available to serve the development in combination with existing campus or adjacent development, or to identify improvements that would be required. Once construction documents are finalized with specifications, the building plans are reviewed and approved by the Division of the State Architect (DSA) for fire/life safety, accessibility, and structural code compliance.

Future projects would also require CEQA review. As described in Section 1.0, *Introduction*, one purpose of this PEIR is to provide a comprehensive, program-level analysis of potential environmental impacts

associated with implementation of the CMP that may be relied upon for future tiered environmental review. As noted in CEQA Guidelines Section 15168(c), future projects would be evaluated in light of the PEIR to determine whether they are within the scope of the PEIR. Factors that are considered in making this determination may include the proposed land use, overall development density and intensity, physical location, and planned infrastructure. Future projects that are determined to be within the scope of the PEIR may rely on a written checklist or similar documentation to demonstrate that potential environmental effects were adequately addressed in the PEIR and to identify applicable mitigation measures. If a future project is determined to be outside of the scope of the PEIR, or would result in new or more severe environmental effects than those analyzed in the PEIR, additional CEQA review may be required.

Each future development project would be subject to approval by the District Board of Trustees and/or the Chancellor, as appropriate. The Board of Trustees delegates authority for certain CEQA review and design decisions to the Executive Vice Chancellor of Operations, Enterprise Services, and Facilities. Approval by the Board of Trustees is anticipated for the long-term projects evaluated in this PEIR, whereas smaller maintenance, renovation, or replacement projects may be approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor depending on their associated contract value. Additional campus development projects not identified in the CMP would require Board of Trustees approval.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

This section of the PEIR analyzes the potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of project implementation. Sections 3.1 through 3.18 evaluate the environmental issues identified during the scoping process as having the potential for significant impacts and requiring further evaluation. The two environmental issue areas excluded from further analysis in this PEIR are Agriculture and Forestry Resources and Mineral Resources. These two subjects are discussed briefly in Section 4.0, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*. The environmental topics addressed in this section of the PEIR include:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire

Level of Analysis

As noted in Section 2.0, *Project Description,* different levels of detail exist for the various facilities and improvements that would occur on campus under the CMP. In general, there is more information available regarding the Athletics Complex and Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure projects, and less detail and certainty with respect to the long-term and campus-wide projects that may occur through buildout of the CMP over the next approximately 20 years. As a result, this PEIR assesses potential environmental impacts at different levels depending on the available information.

Program-Level

For each environmental issue area, potential impacts first are analyzed on a program-level basis for the CMP as a whole, including anticipated on-campus population growth where relevant. This program-level analysis takes a broader perspective based on the anticipated locations and types of the proposed campus facilities and related improvements. Those long-term projects or campus-wide improvements for which only a program-level analysis has been completed may require additional or supplemental environmental review and analysis prior to approval and implementation in accordance with Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21166 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 through 15164 and 15168.

Project-Level

Potential impacts are also analyzed on a project-level basis for the near-term projects for which there is sufficient information known about the proposed construction and operational activities (refer to Section 2.4.3). This analysis is more detailed and focused as it is intended to fully assess potential environmental impacts associated with the near-term projects. In accordance with CEQA, the near-term projects for which a project-level analysis has been completed within this PEIR would be subject to approval and implementation following certification of this PEIR.

Overview of the Environmental Analysis

Each of the following environmental analysis sections provides the environmental setting, regulatory framework, significance thresholds, program-level and project-level impact analysis, mitigation measures (if required), and cumulative impact analysis. The format of the discussion in each section is standardized as much as possible for ease of review. The subheadings are described in greater detail below.

Environmental Setting

According to Section 15125 of the CEQA Guidelines, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must include a description of the existing physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project site to provide the "baseline condition" against which project-related impacts are compared. The baseline condition is generally considered the physical condition that exists when the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is published. The NOP for the project was published on December 5, 2025, and the baseline conditions contained in this PEIR are generally taken from the Fall 2025 semester. However, the CEQA Guidelines and applicable case law recognize that the date for establishing an environmental baseline is not always rigid as physical environmental conditions may vary over time. Therefore, the use of environmental baselines that differ from the date of the NOP can be reasonable and appropriate when conducting environmental analyses, as is the case in some sections of this PEIR.

Regulatory Framework

The Regulatory Framework subsection provides a summary of regulations, plans, policies, and laws that are relevant to each issue area at the federal, state, regional, District, and local levels. It is important to note that a community college district is afforded unique discretion when developing educational facilities. When developing a facility that furthers its educational objectives, a community college district may take action (a two-thirds vote) pursuant to Government Code Section 53094 to exempt a proposed project from the zoning ordinances of the jurisdiction in which the project is located. Therefore, the majority of District projects are not subject to local City of San Diego (City) land use or development regulations. Where such local regulations are discussed in this subsection, their relevance to the environmental issue area or thresholds of significance is also described. In general, such regulations may be used for background information or for the purpose of analysis in the absence of similar District-specific regulations; however, their use as guidance in establishing thresholds of significance for the purposes of this CEQA analysis does not change the applicability of such regulations to future District actions.

Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds of significance addressed in this PEIR are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. The District has not adopted agency-specific CEQA Guidelines or associated thresholds of significance. In some cases, standards were developed specifically for this analysis or were taken from other agencies or entities. Some standards of significance are quantitative, while others are qualitative. Where additional regulations, standards of other agencies, or other guidance are used to determine the level of significance of impacts, these factors are described below the listed thresholds of significance from CEQA Guidelines Appendix G.

Impact Analysis

As previously described, the impact analysis in this PEIR is provided at the program level for the overall CMP and at the project level for select near-term projects. Refer to the discussion of Level of Analysis above for further explanation of the program-level and project-level analysis. Separate discussion of the specific near-term projects is provided within this subsection where the determination of significance or applicability of mitigation varies between the program-level analysis and project-level analysis or between the two near-term projects. Where the impact of the near-term projects does not differ from that of the program-level components or between the different near-term projects, the discussion may be combined or summarized collectively under the following subheadings.

Impact Discussion. As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(a), project-related direct, indirect, cumulative, short-term (temporary), and long-term (permanent) effects on the environment are considered in this PEIR. The environmental changes identified throughout this PEIR are referred to as "effects" or "impacts" interchangeably. Direct impacts are those that would occur directly as a result of the proposed project. Indirect impacts represent secondary effects that would result from project implementation. Cumulative impacts are described further in the introduction to the cumulative impact analysis provided below. Where mandatory compliance with applicable regulations would avoid a significant environmental impact, the applicable regulatory criteria (laws, policies, regulations) and project-required implementing actions (if any) are also described.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation. A summarized impact statement is provided following the analysis for each threshold, specifying the program-level impact and impact for each near-term project where applicable. Where the impact discussion indicates an adverse environmental effect would occur, the impact is considered to be significant prior to mitigation. Where no impact or a less than significant impact is identified, no mitigation is required and the remaining subheadings are omitted.

Mitigation Measures. Where the analysis demonstrates that a physical adverse environmental effect could occur without undue speculation and after mandatory compliance with regulatory criteria, feasible mitigation measure(s) are recommended that could reduce or avoid the significant effect. Mitigation measure(s) must be fully enforceable, have an essential nexus to a legitimate governmental interest, and be "roughly proportional" to the impacts of the project. This section then specifies if the program-level mitigation measures apply to the near-term projects.

Level of Significance After Mitigation. Where mitigation measures were identified as applicable at either the program or project level, this subsection describes the level of impact significance after the implementation of those mitigation measures. In most cases, implementation of the mitigation measure(s) would reduce the adverse environmental impacts below a level of significance. If feasible mitigation is not available, the PEIR provides a discussion of the reasons why it is infeasible to further reduce the impact in support of a significant and unavoidable impact determination.

For the historic resources impact identified as significant and unavoidable, the District would be required to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15093 if the Board of Trustees decides to approve the project despite its significant impact(s) to the environment. The Statement of Overriding Considerations would list the specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other benefits of the project, supported by substantial evidence in the project's administrative record, which outweigh the significant and unavoidable environmental impact to historic resources identified in the PEIR.

Cumulative Impact Analysis

CEQA requires that an EIR contain an assessment of the cumulative impacts that may be associated with a proposed project in addition to its project-specific impacts. As defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15355:

> *'Cumulative Impacts' refers to two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.*
>
> *a) The individual effects may be changes resulting from a single project or a number of separate projects.*
>
> *b) The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.*

In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b), the discussion of cumulative impacts must reflect the severity of the impacts and the likelihood of their occurrence; however, the discussion need not be as detailed as the discussion of environmental impacts attributable to the project alone. Further, the discussion is guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness.

In addition, Section 15130(a) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that EIRs discuss the cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. Therefore, the discussion of cumulative impacts in an EIR first evaluates whether the impacts of the project will be significant when considered in combination with past, present and future reasonably foreseeable projects. If a potentially significant cumulative impact would occur, the EIR considers whether the project would make a cumulatively considerable contribution to that cumulative impact. The CEQA Guidelines indicate that where a lead agency is examining a project with an incremental effect that is not cumulatively considerable, it need not consider the effect significant but shall briefly describe the basis for its conclusion. As further clarified by CEQA Guidelines Section 15065, "cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of an individual project are significant when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

The cumulative analysis contained in this PEIR assumes that all mitigation measures identified in the preceding impact discussion to mitigate potential impacts of the project are adopted. Therefore, the cumulative impact discussion analyzes whether, after adoption of the identified mitigation measures, the remaining impacts of the project in combination with the impacts of related projects would cause a significant cumulative impact or whether the project would have a cumulatively considerable contribution to an existing or anticipated cumulative impact.

Two approaches for cumulative impact analysis are provided in CEQA Guidelines Section 15130(b) and are referred to herein as the "list method" and the "projections method." The list method evaluates cumulative impacts based on a list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related or cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency. The projections method bases the cumulative impact analysis on a summary of projections contained in an

adopted planning document that describes or evaluates conditions contributing to the cumulative effect.

Based on the long-term nature of the proposed CMP projects, this PEIR primarily uses the projections method for cumulative analysis. In some instances, there may be individual reasonably foreseeable projects with characteristics unique to the environmental issue being analyzed that deserve specific consideration; however, specific locations and components of projects that could be implemented in the region throughout the next 20 years are largely unknown. Therefore, the projections method is considered relevant for identifying potential development over this time period that could contribute to cumulative impacts when combined with the proposed campus projects.

Past and present projects are considered part of the baseline when evaluating project impacts. The District is in the process of analyzing master plan frameworks for each of its four campuses and would implement the proposed projects in addition to continuing to construct previously approved campus facilities. Similar to the CMP, the master plans for City College and Miramar College anticipate the replacement and expansion of existing facilities within their current campus boundaries and the accommodation of increasing on-campus enrollment at a rate of 1.5 percent per year. Modernization and expansion of existing College of Continuing Education facilities would occur on its seven existing campuses while a new property at 5322 El Cajon Boulevard would serve as an additional eighth campus for the College of Continuing Education.

Regarding off-campus development, consideration of projects that could be implemented under adopted land use plans, such as the City of San Diego General Plan and Clairemont and Linda Vista Community Plans, is considered sufficient to account for cumulative impacts from future reasonably foreseeable projects. Therefore, the projections method is the primary approach taken in the following sections, especially where the geographic scope of cumulative analysis is regional or citywide.

The appropriate geographic scope for cumulative impact analysis varies depending upon the specific environmental issue area being analyzed. The geographic scope defines the study area within which projects may contribute to a specific cumulative impact. For some issue areas, the cumulative study area may address regional or area-wide conditions, while for other issue areas the potential for cumulative impacts is limited to localized effects. The geographic scope of analysis for each environmental issue area is also described within the cumulative impact analysis.

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3.1 Aesthetics

This section addresses the potential aesthetics impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to aesthetics are also addressed.

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

3.1.1.1 Campus Visual Character

Landform

Mesa College is located on a broad, elevated approximately 106-acre mesa characterized by gently sloping to generally flat topography, with moderate slopes along campus edges where the mesa transitions into surrounding canyon systems. Mesa College sits at an elevated position relative to the surrounding canyon systems and neighborhoods. The elevation of the campus ranges from approximately 220 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) along the western boundary of the project site along Marlesta Drive, to a maximum of approximately 370 feet AMSL within the parking lots along the eastern side of the project site. From the western entrance to campus, Chasewood Way slopes up immediately to parking lot 1, which lies at approximately 290 to 300 feet AMSL. Along the southern edge of this surface parking lot, another slope transitions to the main upper mesa. The baseball field and Merrill Douglas Stadium in the eastern portion of campus lie at lower elevations, below both the main campus to the west and the elevated parking lots and remaining campus buildings to the east. One Open Space Easement occurs in the southwest corner of the Mesa College campus, which would prohibit the alteration of the landforms, removal of vegetation, or erection of structures of any type in this area.

Vegetation

Seven vegetation communities or land use types were mapped in the study area during the February 20, 2025 site assessment conducted for the Biological Resources Technical Report prepared for the project (Appendix C): disturbed southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, scrub oak chaparral, Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed), eucalyptus woodland, disturbed land, and developed land (see Figure 3.3-1). The vegetation communities present within and surrounding the project site primarily occur on the western and southern edges of campus where there is a transition from developed land to open space. Additional vegetation occurs north of the existing athletic fields in the open area between campus development and adjacent residences to the north. The majority of the Mesa College campus is comprised of developed land, including areas of development and redevelopment, roadways, parking lots, pedestrian paths, horticultural open spaces, landscape buffers and courtyards, plazas, gardens, and recreation fields; and disturbed land, including land cleared of vegetation, land containing non-native plant species such as ornamentals or ruderal exotic species, or land showing signs of past or present animal usage that removes any capability of providing viable habitat. As such, vegetation throughout the majority of the project site consists of ornamental landscaping.

Development

Mesa College is generally divided into upper, middle, and lower levels. Existing development on the campus includes approximately 50 permanent buildings and 7 temporary classrooms containing

approximately 1.3 million gross square feet (GSF) and 590,000 assignable square feet. The buildings on the Mesa College campus are designed in a variety of architectural styles, including International, Post-and-Beam, Brutalist, Ranch, Post Modern, and Contemporary. Existing on-campus buildings are generally comprised of glass, metal panels, and concrete, with a color palette that consists of whites, grays, natural wood tones, and occasional bold accent colors. Buildings on the Mesa College campus generally reach up to three to four stories in height, with taller structures located on the western side of campus and at the Mesa College Drive entrance. The majority of these buildings are clustered on the upper level of the mesa in the western portion of campus while the middle to lower levels of campus are dedicated to athletic fields, additional instructional buildings, and parking areas (refer to Figures 2-2 and 2-3).

3.1.1.2 Visual Character of Adjacent Land Uses

The campus is within the Clairemont Community Plan area, which is mainly characterized by urban development, but also includes open space, canyons, and hillsides that provide visual amenities within the community. Due to the area's sloping topography, views of the natural scenic amenities of Mission Bay, Tecolote Canyon Natural Park, Stevenson Canyon, and Marion Bear Memorial Park (San Clemente Canyon) provide visual interest and natural spaces between urban development. The Clairemont Community Plan identifies six view corridors and multiple viewsheds from public vantage points, primarily along the edges of canyons or at locations where the elevation allows views of Mission Bay to the west. Designated view corridors include portions of Balboa Avenue, Clairemont Drive, Regents Road, Milton Street, and Genesee Avenue (City of San Diego [City] 2025a). In addition, the southern edge of the campus borders the northern portion of the Linda Vista Community Plan area, which is a primarily residential community and includes the University of San Diego and portions of Tecolote Canyon as defining visual features (City 2025a).

Roadways surrounding the campus include Beagle Street to the north, Genesee Avenue to the west, Mesa College Drive to the south, and Armstrong Street to the east. Major roadways near the campus include Balboa Avenue to the north, Genesee Avenue to the south and west, Interstate (I-) 805 and State Route (SR) 163 to the east.

Land uses that surround the campus include low-density residential to the north, open space to the south and west, and low- to medium-density residential to the east. The single-family residences to the north and northeast of campus are single-story ranch and Spanish styles homes mainly consisting of neutral colors such as tan, white, and grey, while the multi-family residential uses to the southeast are comprised of two- to three-story apartment buildings in similar neutral colors.

The Tecolote Nature Preserve occurs to the west and southwest of Mesa College, consisting of a west-facing slope that runs down to Genesee Avenue and a south-facing slope into Tecolote Canyon. An opposing east-facing slope occurs on the west side of Genesee Avenue, sloping down from residential development to Genesee Avenue. Additional north-facing slopes oppose those along the southern edge of campus and the Tecolote Canyon system continues in an east-west direction to the west of Genesee Avenue.

3.1.1.3 Visual Resources

Views of Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean to the west are available from some of the taller on-campus buildings located towards the west side of campus due to their location on a mesa above intervening

development. These include the Math and Science Complex (Building MS), the Center for Business and Technology (Building BT), the Learning Resource Center (Building LR), Mesa Commons (Building MC), and the Humanities and Multicultural Studies building (Building G). As these views are available from within existing campus buildings, they do not serve as publicly accessible vantage points. While interrupted by existing mature trees and vehicle parking, intermittent views into the adjacent open space associated with Tecolote Canyon are also available from the southern loop of Mesa College Circle.

The Clairemont Community Plan also identifies the portion of Genesee Avenue to the west of the campus and south of Marlesta Drive as a southbound View Corridor, which is defined as a view or views along public rights-of-way framed by permitted development (City 2025a). Along the portion of Genesee Avenue south of Marlesta Drive, southbound motorists and other roadway users are afforded views of the surrounding Tecolote Canyon undeveloped open space until residential development resumes near Park Mesa Way. Southerly views of the open space available from Genesee Avenue do not include campus development. Genesee Avenue is not identified as having northerly views in this area, though it is noted that multi-level campus buildings on the upper mesa are visible while traveling northbound on Genesee Avenue due to the topography of the canyon and the angle of the roadway.

The Clairemont Community Plan also identifies Viewsheds for the area, which are defined by 90- to 180-degree angles positioned at street centerlines or public vantage points and intersect with the allowable building envelope of surrounding development. The nearest Viewshed to the campus is located at the Tecolote Canyon trailhead along Acworth Avenue, approximately 0.3 mile west of the campus, and provides southerly views into a small branch of Tecolote Canyon where residential development remains visible along the upper edge of the slopes. Mesa College is not visible from this Viewshed as other residential development occurs to the east of the public vantage point. No other Viewshed identified in the Clairemont Community Plan includes the campus, as views in the area are generally to the west towards Mission Bay and the Pacific Ocean or into canyons.

3.1.1.4 State Scenic Highways

The State Scenic Highway System includes a list of highways that are designated as scenic highways by the state or are eligible for that designation. The nearest designated state scenic highways to the campus include the portion of SR 163 through Balboa Park, approximately 3.5 miles to the southeast; and the portion of SR 125 through Mission Trails Open Space, approximately 5 miles to the east. In addition, I-5, SR 52, and I-8 are eligible scenic highways which could be officially designated in the future. (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2018). I-5 is located 2.2 miles west of the campus, SR 52 is located 2.3 miles north of campus, and I-8 is located 2.9 miles south of campus. Due to the distance of these segments from campus and intervening structures and vegetation, the campus is not located in the viewshed of either of the designated state scenic highways or of the nearby eligible scenic highways.

3.1.1.5 Light and Glare

Lighting effects are generally associated with the use of artificial light during the evening and nighttime hours. There are two primary sources of light: light emanating from building interiors passing through windows and light from exterior sources (i.e., street lighting, building illumination, security lighting, parking lot lighting, and landscape lighting). Light introduction can be a nuisance to adjacent residential areas, diminish the view of the clear night sky, and, if uncontrolled, can cause disturbances. Land uses such as residences and hotels are considered light-sensitive, since occupants have expectations of

privacy during evening hours and may be subject to disturbance by bright light sources. Light spill is typically defined as the presence of unwanted light on properties adjacent to the property being illuminated. With respect to lighting, the degree of illumination may vary widely depending on the amount of light generated, height of the light source, presence of barriers or obstructions, type of light source, and weather conditions.

Glare is primarily a daytime occurrence caused by the reflection of sunlight or artificial light by highly polished surfaces such as window glass or reflective materials and, to a lesser degree, from broad expanses of light-colored surfaces. Perceived glare is the unwanted and potentially objectionable sensation observed by a person as they look directly into the light source of a luminaire. Daytime glare generation is common in urban areas and is typically associated with buildings with exterior facades largely or entirely comprised of highly reflective glass. Glare can also be produced during evening and nighttime hours by the reflection of artificial light sources such as automobile headlights. Glare-sensitive land uses include residences, hotels, transportation corridors, and aircraft landing corridors.

The primary sources of light on campus include building lighting, streetlamps, parking lot and similar security lighting, and headlights from vehicles traveling within the campus. Mesa College offers evening classes and programming; therefore, light is emitted during the evening on campus. Similar existing sources of light and glare occur within the campus vicinity and include safety-oriented exterior and interior lighting sources produced from surrounding residential development. In general, more prominent sources of light occur near the multi-family residential development to the east of campus than within the single-family residential area north of campus. Car headlights, street lighting, and traffic signals are also present along internal and external roadways in the campus vicinity. Campus building as well as surrounding development are not substantial sources of glare as structures are primarily finished with stucco or similar non-reflective materials. Glass is used in relatively small areas for windows or natural light and is not a substantial source of glare under existing conditions.

3.1.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of state, District, and local regulations that pertain to aesthetics is provided below. No federal or regional regulations regarding aesthetics apply to the project.

3.1.2.1 State

California Scenic Highway Program

Caltrans manages the California Scenic Highway Program, which was created in 1963 by the California Legislature to preserve and protect scenic highway corridors from changes that would diminish the aesthetic value of lands adjacent to highways. The program includes a list of highways that are eligible for designation as scenic highways or that have been designated as such. The designation of a highway as scenic is based on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes on the travelers' enjoyment of the view. State laws governing the Scenic Highway Program are found in Streets and Highways Code Sections 260 through 263.

3.1.2.2 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

The 2025 District Design Guide and Standards Manual (District 2025) was prepared for use by the design professionals and construction teams during the planning and design phases of renovation and construction projects for the District. It outlines the design approach, space allocation, physical environment, materials, and system requirements, and provides technical standards that the design and construction teams will be expected to meet or exceed. The general criteria and standards provided in this manual apply to all campuses within the District, and specific requirements related to each campus are provided in individual campus guidelines and during the design process. Requirements related to aesthetics are outlined below.

Sustainability & Climate Strategy

Section 1.3, *Sustainability & Climate Strategy*, of the Design Guidelines Standard Manual includes the Climate Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, Green Policies, and SDCCD Sustainability Levels.

Sustainability Plan

Development of the District's Sustainability Plan included workshops in which feedback provided by students, faculty, and staff was used to identify key themes to guide the development of the goals for the Sustainability Plan. Each goal includes a Key Performance Indicator (KPI). These goals have been incorporated into the District's Green Growth program and shall be considered on future facility improvement projects, and include the following related to aesthetics.

Health and Wellbeing Goal 1. Design spaces that reduce stress, maintain emotional well-being, and promote recovery (e.g., social services, biophilic design, wellness spaces). **KPI:** Access to views, fresh air, natural light/materials, plants, flexibility, places to grow things, meditate, reset, affirming.

General Specifications

Section 2.2, of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes general specifications and product and material data for the construction of District projects. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs.

The General Specifications section includes specifications for the design and construction of buildings and structures on District properties that relate to maintaining aesthetic value and minimizing glare. This includes specifications for window shade devices that must provide solar control, glare reduction, and energy efficiency while maintaining visibility and natural daylighting; designing classrooms to minimize glare on whiteboards; and utilizing glare-resistant projection screens.

This section also requires contractors for District projects to prepare mock-ups, which are physical assemblies of construction elements designed to establish quality standards for site work, interior finishes, and exterior finishes. They serve as full-scale representations to verify material selection, assess workmanship, and ensure compliance with design intent prior to full-scale installation. Mock-ups are required for the following construction elements:

1. Site Work: Concrete finishes, paving, hardscapes.
2. Interior Finishes: Paint, wall finishes, flooring.
3. Exterior Finishes: Masonry, stucco, cladding, glazing systems.

3.1.2.3 Local (Non-Regulatory)

The District is not subject to municipal land use planning documents or development regulations in the zoning ordinance. However, as the Mesa College campus is located adjacent to surrounding communities within the City, this analysis considers the aesthetics discussion contained in the City's General Plan and the Clairemont Community Plan as well as the policies in the City's Land Development Code for informational purposes and community context.

City of San Diego General Plan

The City of San Diego General Plan (City 2024) includes a Citywide urban design strategy, goals, and policies regarding the physical features that define the character of a neighborhood or community. These goals complement the goals for pedestrian-oriented and walkable villages articulated in the City of Villages strategy upon which the General Plan is based.

Urban Design Element

The Urban Design Element of the General Plan establishes a set of design principles on which its policies are based and on which future public and private development physical design decisions can be based. Policies within this element generally direct future development to place growth into transit-oriented, mixed-use, and commercial areas; preserve and protect natural landforms and features; design streets to improve walkability, bicycling, and transit integration; and utilize sustainable building methods.

Conservation Element

The Conservation Element guides the sustainable management of the City's natural resources, with sections on open space and landform preservation, wetlands, and the urban forest. Policies call for the conservation of landforms, canyon lands, and open spaces that define the City's urban form, serve as core biological areas and wildlife linkages, or are wetland habitats. Policies related to wetlands require a watershed planning approach that preserves and enhances wetlands, and policies related to urban forestry call for the planting of large canopy shade trees where appropriate and with consideration of habitat and water conservation goals, as well as the retention of significant and mature trees.

City of San Diego Land Development Code

The City's Land Development Code is a portion of the San Diego Municipal Code that contains numerous provisions to guide the design of development throughout the City. Through zoning and development standards, such as specified maximum building heights, maximum lot coverage, minimum and maximum floor-area-ratios, and yard setbacks, the Land Development Code provides restrictions on land development and design that affect visual quality and provide for consistent visual character among specific land use designations.

The Land Development Code also contains development restrictions and guidelines to protect and enhance Environmentally Sensitive Lands. Steep hillsides are defined as those with natural gradients

equal to or in excess of 25 percent with a minimum elevation differential of 50 feet, or a natural gradient of 200 percent with a minimum elevation differential of 10 feet. San Diego Municipal Code Section 142.0101 et seq. contains grading regulations to address (among other things) landform preservation and requires that all grading be designed and performed in conformance with applicable City Council policies and the standards established in the Land Development Manual.

Clairemont Community Plan

The current Clairemont Community Plan was adopted in 2025 and includes an updated vision and strategy to guide future growth and development within the Clairemont community of the City over the following 30 or more years. The Clairemont Community Plan aligns with the City's General Plan land use framework and the City of Villages land use strategy as well as the policy direction of the citywide Climate Action Plan (CAP). The update includes various policies related to the density, visual character, and views within the Clairemont Community Plan area, including, but not limited to, the following:

Policy 4.3 Provide transitions in building height when abutting areas designated for lower density residential neighborhoods, by providing upper story step backs, landscaped buffers, and sloping roofs.

Policy 4.10 Orient buildings to maximize access to daylight, prevailing breezes, and views.

Policy 4.35 Maintain viewsheds from public vantage points and public view corridors along public rights-of-way to natural spaces and habitats in Mission Bay and open space canyons.

Policy 4.36 Maintain required setbacks for buildings within viewsheds and buildings located along designated view corridors along public rights-of-way.

Policy 4.59 Respect required setbacks for buildings within viewsheds and buildings located along designated view corridors and public rights-of-way.

Policy 4.65 Step development down with canyon and hillside landforms to maximize view opportunities, preserve open spaces, and reduce wildfire risks.

3.1.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential aesthetics impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant aesthetics impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Have a substantial effect on a scenic vista;

2. Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway;

3. In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings (public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, conflict with an applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality; or

4. Create a new source of substantial light and glare, which would adversely affect day and nighttime views in the area.

3.1.4 Impact Analysis

3.1.4.1 Scenic Vistas

Threshold 1: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

According to the Clairemont Community Plan, the portion of Genesee Avenue to the west of the campus is identified as a View Corridor providing southerly views, and the nearest Viewshed to the campus is located at the Tecolote Canyon trailhead along Acworth Avenue, approximately 0.3 mile west of the campus. In addition, views toward Mission Bay are available from some of the taller on-campus buildings located on the western portion of campus, as discussed further in Section 3.1.1.3 above. While on-campus views toward Mission Bay and Tecolote Canyon are available from select campus locations, these viewpoints are not publicly accessible and are therefore not considered scenic vistas under CEQA.

Proposed improvements implemented under the CMP would occur within the existing developed campus footprint and would primarily replace or modernize existing facilities without expanding into natural open space or visually sensitive areas. The proposed West Entrance project would place new entrance signage where it would be visible from the portion of Genesee Avenue that is designated as a View Corridor; however, implementation of this project would not obstruct views of the open space area to the south that are currently available while traveling on this roadway segment. Although some new or renovated buildings may alter on-campus views, the structures which would be constructed in accordance with the CMP would generally be of a height that is similar to the existing on-campus buildings. As discussed in Section 3.1.1.1, the campus sits at an elevated position relative to the surrounding canyon systems and neighborhoods and is the tallest landform in the immediately surrounding area; therefore, westerly or southerly views from off-campus land uses through the Mesa College campus are unavailable under existing conditions. As such, new development on the campus would not obstruct views of scenic vistas from land uses in the surrounding area. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be developed within the boundaries of the developed Mesa College campus. As discussed under the program-level analysis above, there are no designated scenic vistas identified within the project area, but there is a View Corridor and a Viewshed identified in the Clairemont Community Plan in the vicinity of campus. However, neither of the near-term projects would be of a height that is greater than the tallest existing building on campus, and both would be constructed between existing campus development that occurs atop the mesa under existing conditions. Therefore, the near-term projects would not obstruct currently available views. As such, development of the near-term projects would not obstruct existing views from land uses in the surrounding area. Therefore, implementation of the near-term projects would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.1.4.2 Scenic Resources

Threshold 2: Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level Analysis

The nearest designated state scenic highways to the campus include the portion of SR 163 through Balboa Park, approximately 3.5 miles to the southeast of the project site, and the portion of SR 125 through Mission Trails Open Space, approximately 5 miles to the east of the project site (Caltrans 2018). In addition, I-5, SR 52, and I-8 are eligible scenic highways which could be officially designated in the future. I-5 is located 2.2 miles west of the campus, SR 52 is located 2.3 miles north of campus, and I-8 is located 2.9 miles south of campus. However, future development under the CMP would not be visible from either of the designated scenic highways or the three nearest eligible scenic highways due to intervening development and distance. Therefore, development proposed under the CMP within the existing campus would not remove or alter natural scenic features such as prominent rock formations or mature tree stands that contribute to a scenic highway. While some trees would be removed or replaced as part of projects implemented under the CMP, these changes would occur in an already developed environment and would not affect resources visible from a state scenic highway. Refer to Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, for discussion of impacts to historic buildings on campus, which are outside of the viewshed of a state scenic highway. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

Project-Level Analysis

The near-term projects are proposed within the Mesa College campus and would not be visible from either of the designated scenic highways nearest to the campus due to intervening development and distance as discussed in the program-level analysis above. Therefore, implementation of the near-term projects would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.1.4.3 Conflict with Scenic Quality Regulations

Threshold 3: In nonurbanized areas, would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage point). If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The Mesa College campus is located in a developed area that meets the criteria of an "urbanized area" as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21071, which defines the term "urbanized area" for the purposes of CEQA to mean an incorporated city that has a population of at least 100,000 persons or has a population of less than 100,000 persons if the population of that city and not more than two contiguous incorporated cities combined equals at least 100,000 persons. According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the City in 2024 was 1,404,452 people (U.S. Census Bureau 2024). Thus, under CEQA, the project site would be considered within an urbanized area as defined by PRC Section 21071, with an applicable threshold for evaluation of visual character and quality impacts based on consistency with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. As discussed above, the City's zoning and land use regulations related to scenic quality would not apply to District development on campus; however, this analysis still considers the scenic quality of the campus and potential views from off-campus land uses within the City as the District aims to provide development that is compatible with surrounding land uses.

It is noted that, pursuant to PRC Section 21099(d), aesthetics impacts are not considered significant under CEQA for residential, mixed-use residential, or employment center projects on an infill site within a Transit Priority Area (TPA). As the Mesa College campus is within a TPA (refer to Section 3.15, *Transportation*), aesthetics impacts from residential projects proposed under the CMP would not be considered significant. Nonetheless, as the majority of future projects would not be residential or otherwise meet the criteria in PRC Section 21099(d), the following discusses potential visual character and quality impacts.

The City's zoning and land use regulations related to scenic quality would not apply to District owned properties such as Mesa College. Instead, the District relies on the comprehensive design standards and sustainability frameworks within the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual to guide development on the Mesa College campus, which includes, but is not limited to, guidelines for building materials, color palettes, and specifications for lighting fixtures. During the design phase of projects implemented under the CMP, the contractor would be required to submit project mock-ups for approval by the District Architect which include the specific project's design intent, colors, textures, and craftsmanship. As such, future campus development projects would be constructed with high aesthetic quality and would be designed to be cohesive with surrounding campus development.

Further, implementation of the projects under the CMP would not require mass grading or the substantial alteration of the existing landform. The CMP projects would continue to implement landscaping similar to existing conditions in accordance with the District's Landscaping Standards, and development would generally be limited to the existing development footprint and avoid open space areas to the south and west, thereby retaining similar visual character to existing conditions.

The campus is in a developed portion of the Clairemont community and is surrounded by established residential neighborhoods, commercial development, and major transportation corridors. Existing public views of the site are defined by a mix of mid-rise academic buildings, parking structures, and other institutional facilities that establish an urban visual character. The projects implemented under the CMP would include modernization, replacement, and infill development within the existing Mesa College campus, which would result in visual changes. However, the height, scale, and visual quality of the projects implemented under the CMP would generally remain consistent with the height, scale, and visual quality of the existing campus built environment. Future projects would comply with the aesthetic requirements for on-campus structures outlined in the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual and would be designed to complement existing campus buildings in exterior finishes. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Project-Level

As outlined in the program-level analysis above, under CEQA, the Mesa College campus, including the near-term project sites, would be within an urbanized area as defined by PRC Section 21071, with an applicable threshold for evaluation of visual character and quality impacts based on consistency with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. Both of the near-term projects would be required to comply with the aesthetic requirements outlined in the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual and summarized above. During the design phase of the near-term projects, the contractor would be required to submit project mock-ups for approval by the District Architect which include the specific project's design intent, colors, textures, and craftsmanship. Further, the height, scale, and visual quality of the near-term projects would generally remain consistent with the height, scale, and visual quality of the existing campus built environment. The Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would be similar in height and scale to the existing Student Services Center (Building I4) to the west. The Athletics Complex project would additionally be similar in height and scale compared to the existing gym and original Exercise Science building (Building L1) that currently occupy this near-term project site, while the athletics fields would be reconfigured but remain similar in character to the existing fields. Therefore, implementation of the near-term projects would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.1.4.4 Light and Glare

Threshold 4: Would the project create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The introduction of light can be a nuisance by affecting adjacent areas and diminishing the view of the clear night sky, depending on the location of the light sources and their proximity to nearby light-

sensitive areas. Glare impacts can occur when artificial light or sunlight reflects off a surface, creating a harsh, intensely bright effect. Glare can create discomfort or present safety concerns. Refer to Section 3.3, *Biological Resources*, for discussion of indirect lighting effects on sensitive species; the following analysis focuses on the built environment.

During implementation of the CMP, nighttime construction could occasionally be required in specific circumstances, such as to accommodate concrete pours during lower temperature hours or to reduce temporary conflicts with traffic or operation of nearby uses. Although nighttime construction would require additional sources of lighting to be present, nighttime construction work would be limited to a few nights of work for those activities needing to occur during nighttime hours for an individual project. As this introduction of lighting during nighttime construction would be temporary and short-term, construction of projects implemented under the CMP would not create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

The Mesa College campus is a developed area that contains a mix of instructional, student support, athletics, and parking uses that require lighting. The existing light sources on the Mesa College campus include streetlights and vehicle lights along internal roadways, lighting on the tennis courts and football field on the eastern portion the campus, security lighting throughout surface parking areas, and interior and exterior building lighting associated with the existing buildings on the campus. Similar light sources also occur along surrounding roadways and within surrounding residential development areas. Existing sources of glare on the campus include building materials such as glass or steel, which are used in limited quantities on existing buildings, especially along roadways, such that they are not substantial sources of glare.

Future development under the CMP would continue the installation and use of the types of lighting sources that occur on campus under existing conditions, including interior and exterior lighting for new buildings, new parking lot and security lighting, and new lighting for exterior athletic facilities. Future projects would be required to comply with the aesthetic requirements outlined in the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which includes specifications for lighting fixtures and requires a review classroom lighting to minimize glare. These specifications, as well as goals in the Sustainability Levels framework to maximize daylight penetration, focus on providing a well-lit interior building environment without excessive glare but do not address the potential effects of exterior lighting on surrounding on- or off-campus uses. All projects proposed under the CMP would be reviewed by the District Architect during the design phase, which would include a review of the project's lighting components and project materials for consistency with the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. However, even with implementation of these District design policies, there is the potential for sources of light and glare generated by the future campus projects implemented under the CMP to result in light spillover or create new sources of glare that affect adjacent properties or roadways.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

For the Athletics Complex project, lighting is anticipated to be installed at existing and reconfigured fields to allow evening usage, in addition to standard building and security lighting along the proposed buildings. The new baseball field lighting would be similar in height and intensity to the existing lighting at the football field; however, without proper shielding, such lighting could result in spillover that adversely affects adjacent properties. As described in the program-level analysis, building materials for the new athletics building also could create new sources of glare. Even with implementation of District

design policies, there is the potential for sources of light and glare generated by the Athletics Complex project to result in adverse light and glare effects on adjacent land uses.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

The Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would require the installation of standard building and security lighting along the outside of the proposed buildings. The parking component of this project could also introduce a new source of glare from vehicle headlights in the multi-level parking structure where parking occurs only in a surface lot under existing conditions. As described in the program-level analysis, building materials for the new building and parking structure also could create new sources of glare. Therefore, even with implementation of standard District design policies, there is the potential for sources of light and glare generated by the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project to result in adverse light and glare effects on adjacent land uses.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, could create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

AES-1 **Exterior Lighting**. Prior to project approval, architectural plans, including detailed lighting plans and fixture specifications, shall be submitted for review and approval by the District Architect. The lighting plans must demonstrate the following to the satisfaction of the District Architect:

- Outdoor lighting fixtures shall be directed or shielded such that light does not fall onto surrounding properties or create glare hazards within public rights-of-way.
- All outdoor lighting shall be turned off between 11:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. except:
    - Outdoor lighting used for security purposes or to illuminate walkways, roadways, and parking lots; and
    - Outdoor lighting used to illuminate recreational activities shall be equipped with automatic timing devices, used while recreational events are in progress, and shielded to minimize light pollution.

AES-2 **Glare Reduction.** Prior to project approval, a project mock-up and materials board shall be submitted for review and approval by the District Architect. The primary building materials shall minimize glare and include non-reflective or matte surfaces for building facades. Windows or other glass treatments shall be glazed, insulated, or otherwise architecturally treated to minimize sunlight reflection to off-site properties and public rights-of-way. Projects that include development or alteration of parking areas shall be designed to shield direct glare from vehicle headlights from residential or other light-sensitive uses through the

physical project design or through shielding mechanisms such as landscaping or physical barriers.

Project-Level

Mitigation measures AES-1 and AES-2 would apply to both the Athletics Complex and Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure projects.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measures AES-1 and AES-2 would reduce program-level and project-level impacts related to the creation of light or glare to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.1.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope for the aesthetics cumulative impact analysis includes the Mesa College campus and surrounding communities, which include the Clairemont Community Plan area and the Linda Vista Community Plan area.

3.1.5.1 Scenic Vistas

Cumulative development projects proposed in the Clairemont and Linda Vista communities could result in significant cumulative impacts to scenic vistas. The addendum prepared for the Clairemont Community Plan concluded that although it is unlikely that future development would result in a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista after compliance with Community Plan policies to protect public views, potential deviations could be allowed and result in a significant impact to scenic vistas (City 2025b). As discussed in Section 3.1.4.1 above, the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not have a significant impact related to scenic vistas as development would not occur between existing viewpoints or corridors and identified scenic resources. Future development would occur within the boundaries of the Mesa College campus, would not substantially increase building height beyond that of existing buildings on the campus, and individual projects would be required to comply with the aesthetic guidelines adopted by the District. Further, based on the project site's elevation and location surrounded by existing development, there are limited opportunities for new development in the vicinity of the campus that would inhibit scenic views of the area. Therefore, the project **would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution** to the significant cumulative impact related to scenic vistas.

3.1.5.2 Scenic Resources

The addendum prepared for the Clairemont Community Plan concluded that the future development projects within the Clairemont Community Plan area would result in areas of increased density, intensity, and building heights, which could result in development that has greater bulk and scale compared to baseline conditions. Where these areas would be visible from currently eligible scenic highways (I-5 and SR-52) that are officially designated in the future, the increased intensity of development would result in significant cumulative impacts associated with scenic highways (City 2025b). As discussed under Section 3.1.4.2, implementation of the CMP would have less than significant impacts related to scenic resources within a scenic highway as projects are proposed within the Mesa College campus boundary, which would not be visible from either of the designated scenic highways or the eligible scenic highways nearest to the campus due to intervening development and distance.

Therefore, implementation of the CMP **would not have a cumulatively considerable contribution** to the significant cumulative impact related to scenic resources.

3.1.5.3 Conflict with Scenic Quality Regulations

The scenic quality of the surrounding communities is currently regulated by the City of San Diego General Plan and Community Plans (Clairemont Community Plan and Linda Vista Community Plan). The addendum prepared for the Clairemont Community Plan determined that future development within the Clairemont Community Plan area could alter the area's existing visual character via increased development intensities, taller buildings, multimodal transportation facility improvements, and new and improved public spaces (City 2025b). Although cumulative development projects would be required to comply with local policies related to scenic quality and undergo environmental review in which mitigation would be prescribed as feasible for impacts related to scenic quality, impacts were determined to be significant and unavoidable. Therefore, cumulative development in the project area could result in significant cumulative impacts to scenic quality. However, the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not have a significant impact related to conflicts with scenic quality regulations, as discussed in Section 3.1.4.3 above. The CMP does not propose a densification of the campus that would substantially increase buildings heights and contribute to the overall change in visual character of the Clairemont Community Plan area. The projects proposed under the CMP would occur within the boundaries of the Mesa College campus and individual projects would be required to comply with the aesthetic guidelines adopted by the District. Therefore, the contribution of the CMP to cumulative scenic quality impacts **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.1.5.4 Light and Glare

Cumulative impacts related to light and glare could occur if future projects proposed in an area would add individual light sources or reflective surfaces that together combine to adversely affect daytime or nighttime views. Development projects within the City would be required to comply with San Diego Municipal Code policies related to the reduction of light and glare, especially related to light shielding for neighboring properties. As such, through regulatory and policy compliance, development proposed in the Clairemont and Linda Vista Community Plan areas would not create substantial light or glare. As discussed in Section 3.1.4.4 above, projects implemented under the CMP would result in less than significant impacts related to light and glare with implementation of mitigation measures AES-1 and AES-2. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to light and glare would be **less than significant**.

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3.2 Air Quality

This section addresses the potential air quality impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to air quality are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analysis in the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report (HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. [HELIX] 2026), provided as Appendix B to the PEIR.

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

The project site is located within the San Diego Air Basin (SDAB), which is comprised of all of the County of San Diego (County). Air quality in the SDAB is regulated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) at the federal level, by the California Air Resources Board (CARB) at the state level, and by the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD) at the regional level.

3.2.1.1 Air Pollutants of Concern

Criteria Pollutants

Criteria pollutants are defined by state and federal law as a risk to the health and welfare of the public. In general, criteria air pollutants include the following compounds:

- Ozone
- Carbon monoxide (CO)
- Nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)
- Particulate matter (PM), which is further subdivided:
  - Coarse PM, 10 microns or less in diameter (PM_{10})
  - Fine PM, 2.5 microns or less in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$)
- Sulfur dioxide (SO_2)
- Lead

Criteria pollutants can be emitted directly from sources (primary pollutants; e.g., CO, SO_2, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, and lead), or they may be formed through chemical and photochemical reactions of precursor pollutants in the atmosphere (secondary pollutants; e.g., ozone, NO_2, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$). PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ can be both primary and secondary pollutants. The principal precursor pollutants of concern are reactive organic gases ([ROGs] also known as volatile organic compounds [VOCs])[1] and nitrogen oxides (NO_X), which react to form ozone.

Descriptions of sources and general health effects for each of the criteria air pollutants are shown in Table 3.2-1, *Common Sources and Human Health Effects of Criteria Air Pollutants*. Specific adverse health effects on individuals or population groups induced by criteria pollutant emissions are highly dependent on a multitude of interconnected variables such as cumulative concentrations, local meteorology and atmospheric conditions, and the number and characteristics of exposed individuals

[1] CARB defines and uses the term ROGs while the USEPA defines and uses the term VOCs. The compounds included in the lists of ROGs and VOCs and the methods of calculation are slightly different. However, for the purposes of estimating criteria pollutant precursor emissions, the two terms are often used interchangeably.

(e.g., age, gender). Criteria pollutant precursors (ROG and NO_X) affect air quality on a regional scale, typically after a significant delay and distance from the pollutant source emissions. Health effects related to ozone and NO_2 are, therefore, the product of emissions generated by numerous sources throughout a region.

Emissions of criteria pollutants from vehicles traveling to or from the project site (mobile emissions) are distributed nonuniformly in location and time throughout the region, wherever the vehicles may travel. As such, specific health effects from these criteria pollutant emissions cannot be meaningfully correlated to the incremental contribution from the project at a regional scale.

Table 3.2-1
COMMON SOURCES AND HUMAN HEALTH EFFECTS OF CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS

Pollutant	Major Human-Made Sources	Human Health Effects
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	An odorless, colorless gas formed when carbon in fuel is not burned completely; a component of motor vehicle exhaust.	Reduces the ability of blood to deliver oxygen to vital tissues, affecting the cardiovascular and nervous system. Impairs vision, causes dizziness, and can lead to unconsciousness or death.
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	A reddish-brown gas formed during fuel combustion for motor vehicles and industrial sources. Sources include motor vehicles, electric utilities, and other sources that burn fuel.	Respiratory irritant; aggravates lung and heart problems. Precursor to ozone and acid rain. Contributes to climate change and nutrient overloading, which deteriorates water quality. Causes brown discoloration of the atmosphere.
Ozone (O_3)	Formed by a chemical reaction between reactive organic gases (ROGs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_X) in the presence of sunlight. Common sources of these precursor pollutants include motor vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, gasoline storage and transport, solvents, paints, and landfills.	Irritates and causes inflammation of the mucous membranes and lung airways; causes wheezing, coughing, and pain when inhaling deeply; decreases lung capacity; aggravates lung and heart problems. Damages plants; reduces crop yield. Damages rubber, some textiles, and dyes.
Particulate Matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$)	Produced by power plants, steel mills, chemical plants, unpaved roads and parking lots, wood-burning stoves and fireplaces, automobiles, and other sources.	Increased respiratory symptoms, such as irritation of the airways, coughing, or difficulty breathing; aggravated asthma; development of chronic bronchitis; irregular heartbeat; nonfatal heart attacks; and premature death in people with heart or lung disease. Impairs visibility (haze).
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	A colorless, nonflammable gas formed when fuel containing sulfur is burned, when gasoline is extracted from oil, or when metal is extracted from ore. Examples are petroleum refineries, cement manufacturing, metal processing facilities, locomotives, and ships.	Respiratory irritant. Aggravates lung and heart problems. In the presence of moisture and oxygen, sulfur dioxide converts to sulfuric acid, which can damage marble, iron, and steel. Damages crops and natural vegetation. Impairs visibility. Precursor to acid rain.
Lead	Metallic element emitted from metal refineries, smelters, battery manufacturers, iron and steel producers, use of leaded fuels by racing and aircraft industries.	Anemia, high blood pressure, brain and kidney damage, neurological disorders, cancer, lowered IQ. Affects animals, plants, and aquatic ecosystems.

Source: CARB 2026a; USEPA 2026

Toxic Air Contaminants

California Health and Safety Code Section 39655(a) defines a toxic air contaminant (TAC) as "an air pollutant which may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or in serious illness, or which may pose a present or potential hazard to human health." A substance that is listed as a hazardous air pollutant pursuant to Section 112(b) of the federal Clean Air Act (CAA) (42 U.S. Code Section 7412[b]) is a TAC. Under state law, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), acting through CARB, is authorized to identify a substance as a TAC if it determines the substance is an air pollutant that may cause or contribute to an increase in mortality or an increase in serious illness, or that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health.

Diesel engines emit a complex mixture of air pollutants, including both gaseous and solid material. The solid material in diesel exhaust is referred to as diesel particulate matter (DPM). Almost all DPM is 10 microns or less in diameter, and 90 percent of DPM is less than 2.5 microns in diameter (CARB 2026b). Because of their extremely small size, these particles can be inhaled and eventually trapped in the bronchial and alveolar regions of the lung. In 1998, CARB identified DPM as a TAC based on published evidence of a relationship between diesel exhaust exposure and lung cancer and other adverse health effects. DPM has a notable effect on California's population; it is estimated that about 70 percent of total known cancer risk related to air toxins in California is attributable to DPM (CARB 2026b).

3.2.1.2 Climate and Meteorology

The climate in southern California, including the SDAB, is controlled largely by the large-scale meteorological condition that dominates the west coast of the U.S.: a seasonally semi-permanent high-pressure cell centered over the northeastern Pacific Ocean, called the Pacific high, which keeps most storms from affecting the California coast. Areas within 30 miles of the coast in the San Diego region, including the project site, experience moderate temperatures and comfortable humidity.

Due to its climate, the SDAB experiences frequent temperature inversions (temperature increases as altitude increases, which is the opposite of general patterns). Temperature inversions prevent air close to the ground from mixing with the air above it. As a result, air pollutants are trapped near the ground. During the summer, air quality problems are created due to the interaction between the ocean surface and the lower layer of the atmosphere, creating a moist marine layer. An upper layer of warm air mass forms over the cool marine layer, preventing air pollutants from dispersing upward. Additionally, hydrocarbons and NO_2 react under strong sunlight, creating smog. Light, daytime winds, predominantly from the west, further aggravate the condition by driving the air pollutants inland, toward the foothills. During the fall and winter, air quality problems are created due to CO and NO_2 emissions. High NO_2 levels usually occur during autumn or winter, on days with summer-like conditions.

The predominant wind direction in the vicinity of the project site is from the west and the average wind speed is approximately 5.6 miles per hour (mph; Iowa Environmental Mesonet 2025). The annual average maximum temperature in the project area is approximately 69.6 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), and the annual average minimum temperature is approximately 56.4°F. Total precipitation in the project area averages 9.84 inches annually (Iowa Environmental Mesonet 2026).

3.2.1.3 Sensitive Receptors

CARB and the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) have identified the following groups of individuals as the most likely to be affected by air pollution: the elderly over 65 years of age, children under 14 years of age, infants (including in utero in the third trimester of pregnancy), and persons with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis (CARB 2005; OEHHA 2015). Some land uses are considered more sensitive to air pollution than others due to the types of population groups or activities involved and are referred to as sensitive receptors. Examples of these sensitive receptors are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers.

The closest existing sensitive receptors to the project site are the single-family residences to the north and east of campus. Further, as project proposes the construction of a community clinic, daycare center, student housing, and high school facilities, some future campus projects would be considered sensitive receptors.

3.2.1.4 Existing Regional Air Quality

Attainment Designations

Attainment designations are discussed further in Section 3.2.2.2 below. In short, regions are designated as being in attainment or nonattainment for each criteria air pollutant based on whether they achieve the relevant federal or state air quality standards. The SDAB is classified as a nonattainment area under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for ozone (8-hour) and as a nonattainment area under the California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) for ozone (1-hour and 8-hour), PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. The SDAB is an attainment area for all other criteria pollutants.

Monitored Air Quality

The SDAPCD operates a network of ambient air monitoring stations throughout the San Diego region. The purpose of the monitoring stations is to measure ambient concentrations of criteria air pollutants and determine whether the ambient air quality meets state and federal standards. The nearest ambient monitoring station to the project site is the Kearny Villa Road monitoring station located approximately 3.5 miles northeast of the project site. Data at this monitoring site are collected for ozone, $PM_{2.5}$, and NO_2. Air quality monitoring data for CO and PM_{10} were obtained from the SDAPCD Annual Air Quality Monitoring Network Plan (SDAPCD 2025a) and represent countywide concentrations. Air quality data for the years 2022 through 2024 are shown in Table 3.2-2, *Air Quality Monitoring Data*.

Table 3.2-2
AIR QUALITY MONITORING DATA

Pollutant Standard	2022	2023	2024
Ozone (O_3) – Kearny Villa Road			
Maximum concentration 1-hour period (ppm)	0.095	0.091	0.112
Maximum concentration 8-hour period (ppm)	0.083	0.079	0.080
Days above 1-hour state standard (>0.09 ppm)	1	0	2
Days above 8-hour state/federal standard (>0.070 ppm)	2	3	3
Carbon Monoxide (CO) – Countywide			
Maximum 8-hour concentration (ppm)	1.2	2.1	2.8
Days above federal standard (>9.0 ppm)	0	0	0

Pollutant Standard	2022	2023	2024
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10}) – Countywide			
Maximum 24-hour concentration (µg/m^3)	243	175	152
Days above federal standard (>150 µg/m^3)	3	1	0[1]
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$) – Kearny Villa Road			
Maximum 24-hour concentration (µg/m^3)	13.9	24.5	21.1
Measured Days above 24-hour federal standard (>35 µg/m^3)	0	0	0
Annual average (µg/m^3)	6.8	7.0	8.0
Exceed federal annual standard (>9.0 µg/m^3)	No	No	No
Exceed state annual standard (>12 µg/m^3)	No	No	No
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2) – Kearny Villa Road			
Maximum 1-hour concentration (ppm)	0.051	0.038	0.042
Days above state 1-hour standard (>0.18 ppm)	0	0	0
Days above federal 1-hour standard (>0.100 ppm)	0	0	0
Annual average (ppm)	0.008	0.006	0.005
Exceed annual federal standard (>0.053 ppm)	No	No	No
Exceed annual state standard (>0.030 ppm)	No	No	No

Source: CARB 2025; SDAPCD 2025a

[1] While the reported maximum 24-hour concentration exceeds 150 µg/m^3, SDACPD reports no daily exceedance for 2024.

ppb = parts per billion; ppm = parts per million; µg/m^3 = micrograms per cubic meter.

As shown in Table 3.2-2, monitoring data at the Kearney Villa Road station reported one exceedance of the 1-hour state ozone standard in 2022 and 2024 but no exceedance in 2023. Concentrations at the Kearny Villa Road station exceeded the 8-hour state/federal ozone standard on two days in 2022, three days in 2023, and three days in 2024. The Kearny Villa Road station reported that the federal and state standard for $PM_{2.5}$ was not exceeded in 2022 through 2024. No exceedances of the state or federal standards for NO_2 occurred from 2022 to 2024 (CARB 2025). Countywide data shows exceedances of the 24-hour PM_{10} standard in 2022 and 2023 and no exceedances of the CO standards for the sample period (SDAPCD 2025a).

Existing On-Campus Air Quality

Emissions associated with the existing development on the project site were estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) and associated adjustment factors published by CARB, as further described in Section 3.2.4.2. Existing emissions at the project site occur in association with the on-site uses, specifically mobile source emissions from vehicle trips to and from the campus; area source emissions generated by maintenance equipment, landscape equipment, and use of products that contain solvents; and energy source emissions from natural gas usage. Table 3.2-3, *Estimated Existing Daily Operational Emissions,* shows the model-calculated pollutant emissions associated with the existing uses at the project site modeled for the CMP buildout year (2045). While the baseline year considered in this PEIR is 2025, the 2045 model year used in these calculations provides emissions that can be compared with project-related emissions at buildout to demonstrate what would occur if the CMP were not implemented and existing campus facilities continued operations in the year 2045 without changes. CalEEMod output files for the existing condition are included in Appendix A, *Existing Campus CalEEMod Output*, of Appendix B to the PEIR.

Table 3.2-3
EXISTING DAILY OPERATIONAL EMISSIONS

Category	Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)					
	VOC	NO_X	CO	SO_2	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Mobile	29.3	18.4	223.0	0.6	72.8	18.6
Area	31.5	--	57.2	<0.1	0.1	0.1
Energy	1.2	21.9	18.4	0.1	1.7	1.7
Total Maximum Daily Emissions	**62.0**	**40.3**	**298.7**	**0.8**	**74.5**	**20.4**

Source: HELIX 2026
VOC = volatile organic compound; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

3.2.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to air quality is provided below.

3.2.2.1 Federal

Federal Clean Air Act

Air quality is defined by ambient air concentrations of specific pollutants identified by the USEPA to be of concern with respect to health and welfare of the general public. The USEPA is responsible for enforcing the federal CAA of 1970 and its 1977 and 1990 Amendments. The federal CAA required the USEPA to establish NAAQS, which identify concentrations of pollutants in the ambient air below which no adverse effects on the public health and welfare are anticipated. In response, the USEPA established both primary and secondary standards for designated criteria pollutants. Primary standards are designed to protect human health with an adequate margin of safety. Secondary standards are designed to protect property and the public welfare from air pollutants in the atmosphere. Table 3.2-4, *Ambient Air Quality Standards*, shows the federal and state ambient air quality standards for these pollutants.

Table 3.2-4
AMBIENT AIR QUALITY STANDARDS

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	Federal Standards Primary[1]	Federal Standards Secondary[2]
O_3	1 Hour	0.09 ppm (180 µg/m^3)	–	–
	8 Hour	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m^3)	0.070 ppm (137 µg/m^3)	Same as Primary
PM_{10}	24 Hour	50 µg/m^3	150 µg/m^3	Same as Primary
	AAM	20 µg/m^3	–	Same as Primary
$PM_{2.5}$	24 Hour	–	35 µg/m^3	Same as Primary
	AAM	12 µg/m^3	9.0 µg/m^3 [(3)]	15.0 µg/m^3
CO	1 Hour	20 ppm (23 mg/m^3)	35 ppm (40 mg/m^3)	–
	8 Hour	9.0 ppm (10 mg/m^3)	9 ppm (10 mg/m^3)	–
	8 Hour (Lake Tahoe)	6 ppm (7 mg/m^3)	–	–
NO_2	1 Hour	0.18 ppm (339 µg/m^3)	0.100 ppm (188 µg/m^3)	–
	AAM	0.030 ppm (57 µg/m^3)	0.053 ppm (100 µg/m^3)	Same as Primary

Pollutant	Averaging Time	California Standards	Federal Standards Primary[1]	Federal Standards Secondary[2]
SO_2	1 Hour	0.25 ppm (655 µg/m^3)	0.075 ppm (196 µg/m^3)	–
	3 Hour	–	–	0.5 ppm (1,300 µg/m^3)
	24 Hour	0.04 ppm (105 µg/m^3)	–	–
Lead	30-day Avg.	1.5 µg/m^3	–	–
	Calendar Quarter	–	1.5 µg/m^3	Same as Primary
	Rolling 3-month Avg.	–	0.15 µg/m^3	Same as Primary
Visibility Reducing Particles	8 Hour	Extinction coefficient of 0.23 per km – visibility ≥ 10 miles (0.07 per km – ≥30 miles for Lake Tahoe)	No Federal Standards	No Federal Standards
Sulfates	24 Hour	25 µg/m^3	No Federal Standards	No Federal Standards
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03 ppm (42 µg/m^3)	No Federal Standards	No Federal Standards
Vinyl Chloride	24 Hour	0.01 ppm (26 µg/m^3)	No Federal Standards	No Federal Standards

Source: CARB 2024; USEPA 2025

[1] National Primary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary, within an adequate margin of safety, to protect public health.

[2] National Secondary Standards: The levels of air quality necessary to protect the public welfare from any known or anticipated adverse effects of a pollutant.

[3] On February 7, 2024, the USEPA announced a final rule to lower the annual arithmetic mean (AAM) primary NAAQS for $PM_{2.5}$ from 12.0 µg/m^3 to 9.0 µg/m^3. The CAAQS has not been lowered; therefore, the more stringent NAAQS applies.

O_3 = ozone; ppm = parts per million; µg/m^3 = micrograms per cubic meter; PM_{10} = particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less; AAM = Annual Arithmetic Mean; $PM_{2.5}$ = fine particulate matter; CO = carbon monoxide; mg/m^3 = milligrams per cubic meter; NO_2 = nitrogen dioxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide; km = kilometer; – = No Standard

The USEPA has classified air basins (or portions thereof) as being in "attainment," "nonattainment," "maintenance," or "unclassified" for each criteria air pollutant, based on whether the NAAQS have been achieved. Upon attainment of a standard for which an area was previously designated nonattainment, the area is classified as a maintenance area. If an area is designated unclassified, it is because inadequate air quality data were available as a basis for a nonattainment or attainment designation. The project site is located within the SDAB and, as such, is in an area designated as a Severe-15 nonattainment area for the 8-hour NAAQS for ozone (USEPA 2025). The SDAB is an attainment area or unclassifiable for the NAAQS for all other criteria pollutants (SDAPCD 2026). Table 3.2-5, *San Diego Air Basin Attainment Status*, lists the federal and state attainment status of the SDAB for the criteria pollutants.

Table 3.2-5
SAN DIEGO AIR BASIN ATTAINMENT STATUS

Criteria Pollutant	Federal Designation	State Designation
Ozone (1-hour)	Attainment[1]	Nonattainment
Ozone (8-hour)	Nonattainment	Nonattainment
CO	Attainment	Attainment
PM_{10}	Unclassifiable[2]	Nonattainment
$PM_{2.5}$	Attainment	Nonattainment[3]
NO_2	Attainment	Attainment
SO_2	Attainment	Attainment
Lead	Attainment	Attainment
Sulfates	(No federal standard)	Attainment
Hydrogen Sulfide	(No federal standard)	Unclassified
Visibility	(No federal standard)	Unclassified

Source: SDAPCD 2026; USEPA 2025

[1] The federal 1-hour standard of 12 ppm was in effect from 1979 through June 15, 2005. The revoked standard is referenced here because it was employed for such a long period and because this benchmark is addressed in State Implementation Plans.

[2] At the time of designation, if the available data does not support a designation of attainment or nonattainment, the area is designated as unclassifiable.

[3] CARB has not reclassified the region to attainment yet due to (1) incomplete data, and (2) the use of non-California Approved Samplers. While data collected does meet the requirements for designation of attainment with federal $PM_{2.5}$ standards, the data completeness requirements for state $PM_{2.5}$ standards substantially exceed federal requirements and mandates, and have historically not been feasible for most air districts to adhere to given local resources. SDAPCD has begun replacing most regional filter-based $PM_{2.5}$ monitors as they reach the end of their useful life with continuous $PM_{2.5}$ air monitors to ensure collected data meets stringent completeness requirements in the future. SDAPCD anticipates these new monitors will be approved as "California Approved Samplers" monitors once CARB reviews the list of approved monitors, which has not been updated since 2013.

CO = carbon monoxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter; NO_2 = nitrogen dioxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide

3.2.2.2 State

California Clean Air Act

The federal CAA allows states to adopt ambient air quality standards and other regulations provided they are at least as stringent as federal standards. CARB has established the more stringent CAAQS for the six criteria pollutants through the California CAA of 1988 and has established CAAQS for additional pollutants, including sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, vinyl chloride, and visibility-reducing particles (refer to Table 3.2-4). Similar to the NAAQS, areas that do not meet the CAAQS for a particular pollutant are designated “nonattainment” areas for that pollutant. As shown in Table 3.2-5, the SDAB is currently classified as a nonattainment area under the CAAQS for ozone (8-hour and 1-hour), PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. The SDAB is an attainment area for the CAAQS for all other criteria pollutants (SDAPCD 2026).

State Implementation Plan

The federal CAA requires areas with unhealthy levels of criteria pollutants to develop plans, known as State Implementation Plans (SIPs). SIPs are comprehensive plans that describe how an area will attain the NAAQS. The 1990 amendments to the federal CAA set deadlines for attainment based on the severity of an area’s air pollution problem. SIPs are not single documents – they are a compilation of

new and previously submitted plans, programs (e.g., monitoring, modeling, permitting), district rules, state regulations, and federal controls. Many of California's SIPs rely on a core set of control strategies, including emission standards for cars and heavy trucks, fuel regulations, and limits on emissions from consumer products. State law makes CARB the lead agency for all purposes related to the SIP. Local air districts and other agencies prepare SIP elements and submit them to CARB for review and approval. CARB forwards the SIP revisions to the USEPA for approval and publication in the Federal Register. The Code of Federal Regulations Title 40, Chapter I, Part 52, Subpart F, Section 52.220 lists all of the items that are included in the California SIP (CARB 2026c). At any one time, several California submittals are pending USEPA approval.

Mobile sources are regulated by the USEPA and CARB, and the emissions reduction strategies related to mobile sources are considered in the local air quality plans. Public Laws 119-15, 119-16, and 119-17 were enacted by U.S. Congress in May 2025 and were signed into law in June 2025, which nullified various USEPA rules regarding California advanced clean car and truck emissions standards. Specifically, these Public Laws disapproved preemption waivers previously approved by the USEPA for the Advanced Clean Cars, California's Advanced Clean Trucks, Zero-Emission Airport Shuttle, and Omnibus Low NO_x regulations. Accordingly, these regulations are preempted by the federal CAA, meaning that California can no longer enforce or attempt to enforce the regulations and that estimated emissions reductions attributed to the regulations cannot be used for development of the California SIP or conformity determinations.

3.2.2.3 Regional

Attainment Plan and Regional Air Quality Strategy

The SDAPCD and San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) are responsible for developing and implementing the clean air plan for attainment and maintenance of the ambient air quality standards in the SDAB. The current regional air quality plan for attainment of the NAAQS in the County is SDAPCD's *2020 Plan for Attaining the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone in San Diego County* (Attainment Plan; SDAPCD 2020). The Attainment Plan, which would be a revision to the SIP, outlines SDAPCD's plans and control measures designed to attain the NAAQS for ozone. The current regional air quality plan for attainment of the CAAQS is SDAPCD's *2022 Revision to the Regional Air Quality Strategy for San Diego County* (RAQS; SDAPCD 2023). The RAQS was initially adopted in 1992 and identifies measures to reduce emissions from sources regulated by the SDAPCD, primarily stationary sources such as industrial operations and manufacturing facilities. The RAQS is periodically updated to reflect updated information on air quality, emission trends, and new feasible control measures (SDAPCD 2023). These plans accommodate emissions from all sources, including natural sources, through implementation of control measures, where feasible, on stationary sources to attain the NAAQS and CAAQS.

The Attainment Plan and RAQS rely on information from CARB and SANDAG, including mobile and area source emissions, as well as information regarding projected growth in the County, to project future emissions and then determine from that the strategies necessary for the reduction of emissions through regulatory controls. CARB mobile source emission projections and SANDAG growth projections are based on population and vehicle trends and land use plans developed by the cities and by the County.

San Diego County Air Pollution Control District Rules and Regulations

SDAPCD adopts rules to regulate pollutant emissions from various sources in the County. The rules also establish procedures for SDAPCD permitting, fees, and hearings. The SDAPCD rules most relevant to the project are described below.

Rule 50 (Visible Emissions)

Particulate matter pollution impacts the environment by decreasing visibility (haze). These particles vary greatly in shape, size, and chemical composition, and come from a variety of natural and manmade sources. Some haze-causing particles are directly emitted to the air such as windblown dust and soot. Others are formed in the air from the chemical transformation of gaseous pollutants (e.g., sulfates, nitrates, organic carbon particles) which are the major constituents of $PM_{2.5}$. These fine particles, caused largely by combustion of fuel, can travel hundreds of miles causing visibility impairment.

Visibility reduction is probably the most apparent symptom of air pollution. Visibility degradation is caused by the absorption and scattering of light by particles and gases in the atmosphere before it reaches the observer. As the number of fine particles increases, more light is absorbed and scattered, resulting in less clarity, color, and visual range. Light absorption by gases and particles is sometimes the cause of discolorations in the atmosphere but usually does not contribute very significantly to visibility degradation. Scattering by particulates impairs visibility much more readily. SDAPCD Rule 50 (Visible Emissions) sets emission limits based on the apparent density or opacity of the emissions using the Ringelmann scale (SDAPCD 1997).

Rule 51 (Nuisance)

SDAPCD Rule 51 (Nuisance) states that a person shall not discharge from any source whatsoever such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to any considerable number of persons or to the public or which endanger the comfort, repose, health, or safety of any such persons or the public, or which cause or have a natural tendency to cause injury or damage to business or property. The provisions of the rule do not apply to odors emanating from agricultural operations in the growing of crops or raising of fowls or animals (SDAPCD 1976).

Rule 55 (Fugitive Dust Control)

SDAPCD Rule 55 (Fugitive Dust Control) requires action be taken to limit dust from construction and demolition activities from leaving the property line. Similar to Rule 50 (Visible Emissions), Rule 55 (Fugitive Dust Control) places limits on the amount of visible dust emissions in the atmosphere beyond the property line. It further stipulates that visible dust on roadways as a result of track-out/carry-out shall be minimized through implementation of control measures and removed at the conclusion of each workday using street sweepers (SDAPCD 2009).

Rule 67.0.1 (Architectural Coatings)

Effective January 1, 2022, SDAPCD Rule 67.0.1 (Architectural Coatings) establishes standards for the VOC content of architectural coatings by coating category. It requires general flat and non-flat coatings (e.g., paint) to have 50 grams per liter (g/L) or less VOC content and traffic marking coatings to have 100 g/L or less VOC content (SDAPCD 2021).

Rule 1200 (Toxic Air Contaminants - New Source Review)

Effective February 13, 2025, SDAPCD Rule 1200 (Toxic Air Contaminants - New Source Review) establishes how SDAPCD evaluates and limits health risks from toxic air contaminants emitted by new, modified, or relocated stationary sources. It requires facilities seeking permits to conduct a health risk assessment and install Toxics Best Available Control Technology when necessary to ensure cancer and non-cancer risks stay below SDAPCD-defined thresholds (SDAPCD 2025b).

3.2.2.4 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Sustainability & Climate Strategy

Section 1.3, *Sustainability & Climate Strategy*, of the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes the Climate Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, Green Policies, and Sustainability Levels. Development of the District's Sustainability Plan included workshops in which feedback provided by students, faculty, and staff was used to identify key themes to guide the development of the goals for the Sustainability Plan. These goals, which each have respective Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), have been incorporated into the District's Green Growth program and shall be considered on future facility improvement projects and include the following related to air quality.

Materials Impact Goal 2. Provide healthy environment that does not abuse material resources and improves health. **KPI:** Maintain optimal CO_2 and VOC levels. Use materials that are low-carbon, recycled, or responsibly sourced.

Design Guides and Standards

Section 2.1 of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual outlines general procedures and standards for new construction and building modifications on District campuses. This section specifies that interior finishes on all renovations or new construction on District properties much use composite wood products which meet CARB Phase 2 requirements, and that all adhesives, sealants, paints, and coatings must meet or exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) Rule 1113 VOC content limits. The SCAQMD Rule 1113 limits for building envelope coating (50 g/L) and traffic coatings (100 g/L) are equivalent to the SDAPCD Rule 67.0.1 requirements for general flat and non-flat coatings and traffic marking coatings outlined in Section 3.2.2.3 above).

General Specifications

Section 2.2 of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes general specifications and product and material data for the construction of District projects. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs. Related to air quality, the District standard is for all new equipment to be all-electric and not use natural gas for functions that can instead be served by electric equipment, such as building and water heating. Natural gas may only be used in select instances where electric alternatives are not available or would not serve the intended purpose, subject to prior approval by the District Architect.

3.2.2.5 Local (Non-Regulatory)

While the District is not subject to local zoning regulations or land use planning documents, the campus is located adjacent to properties within the City of San Diego's (City's) jurisdiction and could involve construction work within City rights-of way (ROWs), which would be subject to the San Diego Municipal Code section below.

San Diego Municipal Code

The San Diego Municipal Code addresses the release of air contaminants in Section 142.0710 (Air Contaminant Regulations), which states:

> Air contaminants including smoke, charred paper, dust, soot, grime, carbon, noxious acids, toxic fumes, gases, odors, and particulate matter, or any emissions that endanger human health, cause damage to vegetation or property, or cause soiling, shall not be permitted to emanate beyond the boundaries of the premises upon which the use emitting the contaminants is located.

3.2.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential air quality impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant air quality impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan;
2. Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard;
3. Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations; or
4. Result in emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines states that the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the above determinations. Therefore, to determine whether a project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, or ozone precursors (NO_X and VOCs), project emissions can be evaluated in comparison with the quantitative emission thresholds established by the SDAPCD. As part of its air quality permitting process, the SDAPCD has established thresholds in Rules 20.2 and 20.3 for the preparation of Air Quality Impact Assessments. In the absence of SDAPCD adopted thresholds for VOCs, the City's screening threshold is used in this analysis (City 2022).

The screening criteria were developed by SDAPCD with the purpose of attaining the NAAQS and CAAQS. Therefore, for CEQA purposes, these screening criteria can be used as numeric methods to demonstrate that a project's total emissions would not result in a significant impact to regional air quality. The screening thresholds are included in Table 3.2-6, *Screening-Level Thresholds for Air Quality Impact Analysis*.

Table 3.2-6
SCREENING-LEVEL THRESHOLDS FOR AIR QUALITY IMPACT ANALYSIS

Pollutant	Emissions		
	Pounds per Hour	Pounds per Day	Tons per Year
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	--	100	15
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	--	67	10
Oxides of Nitrogen (NO_X)	25	250	40
Oxides of Sulfur (SO_X)	25	250	40
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	100	550	100
Lead and Lead Compounds	--	3.2	0.6
Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)	--	137	15

Source: SDAPCD 2019; City 2022

3.2.4 Impact Analysis

3.2.4.1 Air Quality Plans

Threshold 1: Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The SDAPCD is required, pursuant to the federal CAA, to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants for which the SDAB is in nonattainment. Strategies to achieve these emissions reductions are developed in the Attainment Plan, RAQS, and SIP, prepared by the SDAPCD for the region. The Attainment Plan, RAQS, and SIP are based on SANDAG population projections, as well as land use designations and population projections included in general plans for cities and the County. Regional population growth is typically associated with the construction of residential units or large employment centers.

Projects that propose development that is consistent with the growth anticipated by SANDAG would be consistent with the Attainment Plan and RAQS. If a project proposes development that is less intensive than anticipated within the applicable general plan or land use assumptions used by SANDAG to develop its projections, the project would likewise be consistent with the Attainment Plan and RAQS. If a project proposes development that is more emissions-intensive than that anticipated in the applicable general plan or growth projections upon which the Attainment Plan and RAQS are based, the project could conflict with the Attainment Plan and RAQS and may have a potentially significant impact on air quality. This situation would warrant further analysis to determine whether the project and the surrounding projects exceed the growth projections used in the Attainment Plan and RAQS for the specific subregional area.

The purpose of the proposed CMP is to implement campus wide improvements to modernize existing facilities, improve programming, and accommodate on-campus student enrollment growth anticipated through 2045 within the existing Mesa College campus. The project would accommodate regional growth that is projected through 2045 (refer to Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*) and would include land uses that are generally consistent with the existing campus land use types. Therefore, the project

would not increase the regional population beyond SANDAG's growth forecasts. The RAQS and Attainment Plan rely on the same information from the SANDAG growth forecast to develop emission inventories and emission reduction strategies that are included in the attainment demonstration for the air basin. Because the project would not generate population growth beyond the levels assumed for the region, the project would not conflict with population growth projections for the region and would, therefore, be consistent with the RAQS and Attainment Plan. In addition, as detailed in Section 3.2.4.2, below, the project would not exceed daily screening level thresholds for emissions of ozone precursors or criteria air pollutants.

Project-Level

As individual components of the CMP described in the program-level analysis above, the near-term projects would be consistent with the existing campus land use types and would not generate population growth beyond the levels assumed for the region. As such, the near-term projects would not conflict with population projections for the region and would, therefore, be consistent with the RAQS and Attainment Plan. In addition, as detailed in Section 3.2.4.2, below, the near-term projects would not exceed daily screening level thresholds for emissions of ozone precursors or criteria air pollutants.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.2.4.2 Air Quality Standards

Threshold 2: Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Impact Discussion

By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. The nonattainment status of regional pollutants is a result of past and present development within the SDAB. As discussed in Section 3.2.1.4, the region is a federal and/or state nonattainment area for ozone, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. Implementation of the CMP would generate criteria pollutants and ozone precursors sporadically during construction activities and on an ongoing basis during campus operation. To determine whether the project would result in a cumulatively considerable net increase in criteria pollutants that would violate an air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation, the near-term project construction emissions and the CMP buildout operational emissions are evaluated in comparison with the quantitative screening thresholds discussed in Section 3.2.3 and shown in Table 3.2-6.

Criteria pollutant and precursor emissions were calculated using CalEEMod, Version 2022.1. CalEEMod is a computer model used to estimate emissions resulting from land development projects throughout California. CalEEMod was developed by the California Air Pollution Control Officers Association (CAPCOA) in collaboration with California air quality management and pollution control districts (CAPCOA 2022).

In brief, CalEEMod is a computer model that estimates criteria air pollutant and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from mobile (i.e., vehicular) sources, area sources (fireplaces, woodstoves, and landscape maintenance equipment), energy use (electricity and natural gas used in space heating, ventilation, and cooling; lighting; and plug-in appliances), water use and wastewater generation, solid waste disposal, and stationary sources. In various places, the user can input additional information and/or override the default assumptions to account for project- or location-specific parameters. For the assessment of air quality impacts, the inputs focus on mobile, area, energy (natural gas), and stationary sources. Default parameters were not changed unless otherwise noted in Section 4.1 of Appendix B to the PEIR.

Program-Level

Construction Emissions

Construction of the projects proposed under the CMP would be similar in scale and construction intensity, would require similar types of construction activity, and would utilize similar types of construction equipment to the near-term projects, the maximum daily emissions for which are presented in the project-level analysis below. Construction input data for emissions modeling using CalEEMod include, but are not limited to, (1) the anticipated start and finish dates of construction activity; (2) inventories of construction equipment to be used; (3) areas to be excavated and graded; and (4) volumes of materials to be exported from and imported to the project site. The analysis assessed maximum daily emissions from individual construction activities associated with implementation of the near-term projects, which are each expected to include demolition, site preparation, grading, utility undergrounding, building construction, architectural coating, and paving, similar to future CMP projects. Construction would also occur in accordance with SDAPCD Rules 55 and 67.0.1, which would limit PM emissions from ground disturbance and VOC emissions from coating application; the modeled construction emissions assume compliance with these rules. The District anticipates that grading would be balanced on-site for future projects, and as such the model did not include import or export during construction.

The quantity, duration, and intensity of construction activity influence the amount of construction emissions and related pollutant concentrations that occur at any one time. As such, the emission forecasts prepared for the near-term projects reflect a specific set of conservative assumptions based on the expected construction scenario wherein a relatively large amount of construction activity is occurring in a relatively intensive manner. Because of this conservative assumption, actual emissions from future project construction could be less than those forecasted in future years as a more modern and cleaner-burning construction equipment fleet mix than assumed in CalEEMod becomes available.

As shown in the project-level analysis below, even if the maximum day of emissions associated with the two near-term projects occurred on the same day, the screening thresholds would not be exceeded. Simultaneous construction of these two projects is a reasonably conservative scenario for the intensity of concurrent construction that may occur on campus during implementation of the CMP. The use of equipment for minor renovations or other maintenance projects would be less intensive than for the near-term or long-term redevelopment projects. As the criteria pollutant and precursor emissions associated with construction of the near-term projects would be below the applicable screening thresholds, even with concurrent construction, it can be assumed that future construction activities required for buildout of the CMP also would not exceed these screening thresholds.

Operational Emissions

The net increase in operational emissions associated with full buildout of the CMP (operational year 2045) over existing conditions (refer to Table 3.2-3) was estimated using CalEEMod. Model inputs for mobile sources were based on the projected 2045 Mesa College on-campus enrollment of 15,358 students, resulting in an estimate of 17,662 average daily trips (ADT; Linscott, Law & Greenspan Engineers [LLG] 2026a). As new buildings would typically be all-electric, natural gas demand at buildout of the CMP was assumed to decrease proportionally with the demolition of existing buildings based on the rate of natural gas per square foot used from March 2024 to February 2025. To account for the potential addition of a linear generator on campus, the model included the operation of a generator for 8 hours per day and 200 hours per year.

Operational emissions calculations and model outputs are provided in Appendix C, *CMP Full Buildout CalEEMod Output*, of Appendix B to the PEIR. Table 3.2-7, *Net Daily Operational Emissions at Buildout*, presents the summary of the net increase in daily operational emissions for the project in comparison with the daily thresholds provided in Table 3.2-6.

Table 3.2-7
NET DAILY OPERATIONAL EMISSIONS AT BUILDOUT

Category	Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)					
	VOC	**NO_X**	**CO**	**SO_2**	**PM_{10}**	**$PM_{2.5}$**
Mobile	39.4	24.8	300.4	0.9	98.0	25.1
Area	48.7	--	122.5	<0.1	0.2	0.1
Energy	0.9	17.2	14.4	0.1	1.3	1.3
Stationary	23.6	<0.1	61.4	<0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Daily Emissions[1]	**112.7**	**42.0**	**498.7**	**1.0**	**99.6**	**26.6**
Existing Daily Emissions (Table 3.2-3)	62.0	40.3	298.7	0.8	74.5	20.4
Net Daily Emissions[1]	**50.7**	**1.7**	**200.0**	**0.2**	**25.1**	**6.2**
Screening Thresholds	*137*	*250*	*550*	*250*	*100*	*67*
Significant Impact?	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***

Source: HELIX 2026

[1] Totals and differences may not compute due to rounding.

VOC = volatile organic compound; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_2 = sulfur dioxide; PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

As shown in Table 3.2-7, the net increase in emissions of all criteria pollutants and ozone precursors associated with operation of the project would be below the daily screening thresholds.

Project-Level

Construction Emissions

The near-term project construction emissions were estimated using CalEEMod based on the anticipated construction schedules for these projects. Emissions estimated for construction assume conformance with SDAPCD Rules 55 and 67.0.1, specifically watering exposed areas twice per day, limiting vehicle speeds on unpaved on-site roads, and limiting the VOC content of architectural coatings to 50 g/L for building coatings and 100 g/L for parking lot markings.

The results of the emissions calculations for construction of the near-term projects are shown in Table 3.2-8, *Maximum Daily Construction Emissions*. The data are presented as the maximum anticipated daily emissions for the near-term projects. As certain phases of construction would occur concurrently for the near-term projects and could similarly occur concurrently during future construction, the combined maximum daily emissions are additionally presented and compared to the applicable screening thresholds as a conservative construction scenario. The complete CalEEMod outputs are provided in Appendix B, *Near-Term Construction CalEEMod Output*, of Appendix B to the PEIR.

Table 3.2-8
MAXIMUM DAILY CONSTRUCTION EMISSIONS

Year	Pollutant Emissions (pounds per day)					
	VOC	NO_X	CO	SO_X	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Athletics Complex						
2028	3.1	27.5	29.0	<0.1	9.0	5.0
2029	1.2	9.6	16.0	<0.1	1.1	0.5
2030	11.7	25.3	29.0	<0.1	8.9	5.0
2031	11.7	0.8	1.1	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Athletics Complex Maximum Daily Emissions	***11.7***	***27.5***	***29.0***	***<0.1***	***9.0***	***5.0***
Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure						
2027	1.7	12.3	18.4	<0.1	3.4	1.9
2028	12.2	11.9	18.0	<0.1	3.4	1.8
2029	1.6	10.8	17.6	<0.1	1.8	3.4
2030	9.0	10.6	16.6	<0.1	1.8	0.6
Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure Maximum Daily Emissions	***12.2***	***12.3***	***18.4***	***<0.1***	***3.4***	***3.4***
Combined Maximum Daily Emissions[1]	**23.9**	**39.8**	**47.4**	**0.1**	**12.4**	**8.4**
Screening Threshold	*137*	*250*	*550*	*250*	*100*	*67*
Significant Impact?	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***

Source: HELIX 2026

[1] Combined maximum daily emissions are presented without regard for construction year to represent the maximum daily emissions anticipated to be generated by simultaneous construction projects during CMP implementation.

VOC = volatile organic compound; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_X = sulfur oxides; PM_{10} = particulate matter 10 microns or less in diameter; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter 2.5 microns or less in diameter

As shown in Table 3.2-8, the near-term project's combined short-term construction-related criteria pollutant and precursor emissions would be below the screening thresholds during concurrent construction.

Operational Emissions

Operational emissions from the near-term projects proposed under the CMP are accounted for in the emissions calculated for the full buildout of the CMP provided in Table 3.2-7 above, which demonstrates that the net increase in operational emissions would be below the applicable thresholds. The incremental change in pollutant and precursor emissions as each near-term project becomes operational would be minimal as these projects would replace similar uses with new but expanded facilities. As shown in Table 3.2-7, mobile sources contribute the most to daily emissions and campus-related trips; however, trip generation would not be affected by the near-term projects. The increase in

building area proposed by the near-term projects would result in a slight increase in area emissions as these are proportional to building square footage. While the expanded buildings would likely require more energy, they would remove the use of natural gas which contributes to air pollutant and precursor emissions.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.2.4.3 Sensitive Receptors

Threshold 3: Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Construction

Implementation of the CMP would result in the use of heavy-duty construction equipment, haul trucks, on-site generators, and construction worker vehicles. These vehicles and equipment could generate the TAC DPM. CARB has declared that DPM from diesel engine exhaust is a TAC, and OEHHA has determined that chronic exposure to DPM can cause carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic health effects. For this reason, although other pollutants would be generated from project construction, DPM is the primary pollutant of concern.

The dose (of TAC) to which receptors are exposed is the primary factor used to determine health risk. Dose is a function of the concentration of a substance in the environment and the extent of exposure a person has to the substance; a longer exposure period to a fixed quantity of emissions would result in higher health risks. Current models and methodologies for conducting cancer health risk assessments (HRAs) are associated with longer-term exposure periods (typically 30 years for individual residents based on guidance from OEHHA) and are best suited for evaluation of long-duration TAC emissions with predictable schedules and locations. These assessment models and methodologies do not correlate well with the temporary and highly variable nature of construction activities. Cancer potency factors are based on animal lifetime studies or worker studies where there is long-term exposure to the carcinogenic agent. There is considerable uncertainty in trying to evaluate the cancer risk from projects that will only last a small fraction of a lifetime (OEHHA 2015). In addition, concentrations of mobile-source DPM emissions disperse rapidly and are typically reduced by 70 percent at approximately 500 feet (CARB 2005).

Generation of DPM from construction projects typically occurs in a localized area (e.g., at the project site) for a short period of time. Because construction activities and subsequent emissions vary depending on the construction activity, the construction-related emissions to which nearby receptors are exposed would also vary throughout the construction period. During some equipment-intensive activities, such as site preparation or grading, construction-related emissions would be higher than during other, less equipment-intensive activities, such as building construction. Considering the short

duration when intensive off-road diesel equipment would be used on the campus, the highly dispersive nature of DPM, and the fact that construction activities would occur at various locations throughout the campus (not concentrated near any single receptor for extended periods), construction projects implemented under the CMP would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial DPM concentrations.

Operation

Potential impacts to sensitive receptors during project operation are analyzed for CO hotspots and exposure to land uses that typically generate TACs.

CO Hotspots

Vehicle exhaust is the primary source of CO. In an urban setting, the highest CO concentrations are generally found within close proximity to congested intersections. Under typical meteorological conditions, CO concentrations tend to decrease as the distance from the emissions source (i.e., congested intersection) increases. The increased trips associated with future increases in on-campus enrollment have the potential of contributing to localized "hot spots" of CO off-site. Because CO is a byproduct of incomplete combustion, exhaust emissions are worse when fossil-fueled vehicles are operated inefficiently, such as in stop-and-go traffic or through heavily congested intersections.

The SDAPCD has not adopted quantitative screening criteria for when an intersection or road segment might generate CO hotspots. However, the volume of vehicles required to result in a CO hotspot is very high. For example, the Bay Area Air District's screening criteria for CO hotspots is intersections with more than 44,000 vehicles per hour, or intersections with 24,000 vehicles per hour where vertical and/or horizontal mixing is substantially limited (e.g., tunnel, parking garage, bridge underpass, natural or urban street canyon, below-grade roadway; Bay Area Air District 2023). Based on the Local Mobility Analysis prepared for the CMP, the project is estimated to generate a net increase of 4,548 ADT by the operational year of 2045 (LLG 2026b). The addition of these trips to nearby intersections would not be of a quantity to generate a CO hotspot, given roadway segments near the project site are projected to carry up to 17,969 vehicles per day in 2045 (LLG 2026b) and do not include roadway types where vertical and/or horizontal mixing is substantially limited.

Sensitive Receptors

CARB siting recommendations within the *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook* suggest a detailed health risk assessment should be conducted for sensitive receptors within 1,000 feet of a warehouse distribution center, within 300 feet of a large gas station (defined as a facility with a throughput of 3.6 million gallons per year or greater), 50 feet of a typical gas dispensing facilities, within 300 feet of a dry cleaning facility that uses perchloroethylene, or 500 feet of a freeway or urban road with 100,000 or more vehicles per day (CARB 2005). The CMP would include instructional, student support, athletics, and parking land uses. As such, the CMP would not construct the sources listed above and would not represent a substantial source of TACs.

The CMP would not include the addition of emergency generators but could include the installation of a linear generator to provide electrical utility load flexibility. Operation of the proposed natural gas-fired linear generator system would result in TAC emissions that could affect sensitive receptors. Because the generator location and operating characteristics are unknown at this stage of the planning process, quantification of health risks would be speculative at this program level of analysis. However, as a new stationary source, the generator would be subject to SDAPCD permitting requirements, including Rule

1200, which ensures that emissions of TACs do not result in unacceptable health risks. Compliance with applicable SDAPCD permitting regulations would avoid the potential for adverse effects to sensitive receptors once the location of the generator is determined.

Project-Level

Construction

Implementation of the near-term projects would result in the use of heavy-duty construction equipment, haul trucks, on-site generators, and construction worker vehicles which could generate the TAC DPM. However, as detailed further in the program-level analysis above, based on the short duration when intensive off-road diesel equipment would be used during construction of the near-term projects, the highly dispersive nature of DPM, and the fact that construction activities would occur at various locations (not concentrated near any single receptor for extended periods), construction of the near-term projects would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial DPM concentrations.

Operation

As discussed in the program-level analysis above, buildout of the CMP would not result in the generation of CO hotspots as the addition of campus-related trips to nearby intersections would not exceed screening thresholds established by the Bay Area Air District. As such, the near-term projects, which would not directly generate additional vehicle trips, would not result in CO hotspots.

The near-term projects include recreational, educational, and administrative land uses and would not include the land use types or other equipment that generate substantial TACs as described under the program-level analysis above. No new stationary sources of substantial TACs are proposed and no associated permitting would be required. As such, the near-term projects would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.2.4.4 Odors

Threshold 4: Would the project result in emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

California Health and Safety Code Sections 41700 and 41705, and SDAPCD Rule 51 prohibit emissions from any source whatsoever in such quantities of air contaminants or other material which cause injury, detriment, nuisance, or annoyance to the public health or damage to property. An unreasonable odor discernible at the property line of the project site is considered a significant odor impact.

Implementation of the CMP could produce temporary odors during proposed construction activities from construction equipment exhaust, application of asphalt, and/or the application of architectural coatings. However, odors emitted during construction would be temporary, short-term, and intermittent in nature, as they would cease upon the completion of the respective phase of construction. Accordingly, implementation of the CMP would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people during construction.

According to the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook, land uses associated with odor complaints typically include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting activities, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding operations (SCAQMD 1993). The CMP, involving academic, housing, childcare, medical, and parking uses, does not propose these types of odor-generating land uses. The CMP would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

Project-Level

The near-term projects proposed under the CMP could produce odors during construction activities from construction equipment exhaust, application of asphalt, and/or the application of architectural coatings. However, odors emitted during construction would be temporary, short-term, and intermittent in nature, and would cease upon the completion of the respective phase of construction. In addition, the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not include the land uses associated with odor complaints as described in the program-level analysis above. The near-term projects would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.2.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope for the air quality plans and air quality standards cumulative analysis is the SDAB. It is appropriate to consider the entire air basin for these thresholds as pollutant emissions can travel substantial distances and are not confined by jurisdictional boundaries; rather, they are influenced by large-scale climatic and topographical features. Potential impacts to sensitive receptors and odor generation are more localized, and a cumulative impact for these thresholds could occur if concurrent construction or operations would generate substantial pollutants or odorous emissions that would combine to affect neighboring land uses in the immediate vicinity.

3.2.5.1 Air Quality Plans

A metric for assessing a project's cumulative impact with respect to air quality is whether it is consistent with the assumptions underlying an adopted local, regional, or statewide plan, or a related planning document on air quality. Cumulative development projects proposed within the SDAB could propose general plan amendments or land use or zoning changes that result in development that is not accounted for in the growth assumptions that inform the SDAB air quality plans, resulting in a significant cumulative impact. However, as discussed above, implementation of the CMP, including the near-term

projects, would not generate emissions that are unaccounted for in regional planning documents. As such, the contribution of the CMP, including the near-term projects, to the significant cumulative impact **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.2.5.2 Air Quality Standards

The SDAB is classified as a nonattainment area under the NAAQS for ozone (8-hour) and as a nonattainment area under the CAAQS for ozone (1-hour and 8-hour), PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5.}$ The nonattainment status of regional pollutants is a result of past and present development within the SDAB, and this regional impact is cumulative in nature rather than attributable to any one source. Cumulative projects throughout the air basin generate construction and operational emissions of PM and the ozone precursors VOC and NO_X that contribute to significant cumulative air quality impacts. The thresholds of significance established by the SDAPCD (refer to Table 3.2-6) are relevant to whether a project's individual emissions would result in a cumulatively considerable incremental contribution to the existing cumulative air quality conditions of the SDAB. These thresholds are designed to identify those projects that would result in significant levels of air pollution and to assist the region in attaining the applicable state and federal ambient air quality standards. As described in Section 3.2.4.2 above, emissions during construction and operation of projects implemented under the CMP would not generate emissions that would violate these thresholds or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation. As such, the contribution of the CMP, including the near-term projects, to the significant cumulative impact for air quality standards in the SDAB **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.2.5.3 Sensitive Receptors

Cumulative development projects could result in significant impacts to sensitive receptors during construction and operation. Although construction of these cumulative development projects would likely be short term and involve construction activities at various locations throughout the project vicinity, it is unknown at this time the scale and nature of these construction activities. In addition, cumulative development projects could result in an increase in trips which contribute to a CO hotspot and could locate sensitive receptors within the CARB siting recommendations within the *Air Quality and Land Use Handbook*. Although cumulative discretionary development projects involving the type of development would likely be required to conduct a Health Risk Assessment and incorporate mitigation measures to reduce these potential impacts to sensitive receptors, cumulative impacts are considered significant. However, as discussed above, implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations during either construction or operations. Therefore, the CMP would **not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to impacts to sensitive receptors.

3.2.5.4 Odors

Cumulative development projects that are proposed on neighboring properties to the Mesa College campus could produce odors similar to the project during construction and operation. Construction odors would be temporary and short term, and even if multiple construction projects occur in close proximity to each other, the respective odorous emissions would cease at the conclusion of construction. Once operational, cumulative development projects adjacent to the Mesa College campus are not anticipated to propose land uses associated with odor complaints as defined in the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook, as the parcels that neighbor the Mesa College campus are not zoned for

these uses. As discussed above, implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people during construction or operations. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to the production of odors or other emissions would be **less than significant**.

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3.3 Biological Resources

This section addresses the potential biological resources impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to biological resources are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analysis in the Biological Resources Technical Report (HELIX 2026), provided as Appendix C to the PEIR.

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

The biological study area described in the Biological Resources Technical Report and throughout this section includes a total of approximately 135.01 acres, including the 106-acre Mesa College campus and a surrounding 100-foot buffer. The campus is within a suburban residential area and developed portions of campus are located east and northeast of an open space canyon system that occurs in the western part of the project site near Genesee Avenue. The developed portions of the campus were constructed primarily between the 1960s and 1980s, with additional infill development occurring in subsequent decades, and include academic buildings, athletic and recreational facilities, structured and surface parking lots, and landscaped open space areas.

3.3.1.1 Vegetation and Land Use Types

Seven vegetation communities or land use types occur within the biological study area: disturbed southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, scrub oak chaparral, Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed), eucalyptus woodland, disturbed land, and developed land (see Table 3.3-1, *Existing Vegetation Communities/Land Use Types*, and Figure 3.3-1, *Vegetation and Special-Status Species*). Of the seven vegetation and land use types, four are sensitive, including disturbed southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, scrub oak chaparral, and Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed). Disturbed southern willow scrub and disturbed wetland are also considered wetland vegetation communities.

Table 3.3-1
EXISTING VEGETATION COMMUNITIES/LAND USE TYPES

Vegetation Community/Land Use Type	Description	Study Area Acreage
Wetlands		
Disturbed Southern Willow Scrub	Dense, broad-leaved, winter-deciduous stands of trees dominated by shrubby willows in association with mule fat. Occurs west of the developed portion of campus near Genesse Avenue and west of the parking structure on campus.	2.23
Disturbed Wetland	Exotic wetland species that invade areas previously altered or periodically disturbed and include giant reed and tamarisk. Occurs west of the developed campus near Genesse Avenue and north of Marlesta Drive.	0.76
	Wetlands Subtotal	**2.99**
Uplands		
Scrub Oak Chaparral	Dense, evergreen chaparral up to 20 feet tall dominated by scrub oak and mountain mahogany. Occurs in western part of campus near the Animal Health buildings (Building P4 and Building P5) and in the southwestern corner of the biological study area.	2.67

Vegetation Community/Land Use Type	Description	Study Area Acreage
Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub (including disturbed)	Shrub species that typically include California sagebrush, California buckwheat, laurel sumac, lemonadeberry, white sage, and black sage. Occurs in southern and northern portions of the study area north of the baseball field and parking area, south of the parking structure, and the southwestern corner of campus.	7.09
Eucalyptus Woodland	An introduced species often planted for wind-blocking, ornamental, and hardwood production. Occurs around northern, southern, and western edges of the developed campus throughout the study area.	3.75
Disturbed Land	Includes land cleared of vegetation or containing non-native ornamental species. Occurs around northern, southern, and western edges of the developed campus throughout the study area.	8.02
Developed	Includes developed areas and occurs within most of the study area.	110.49
	Uplands Subtotal	**132.02**
	Total	**135.01**

Source: HELIX 2026

3.3.1.2 Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waters

As described above, wetland vegetation communities (i.e., disturbed southern willow scrub and disturbed wetland) occur within the biological study area. A formal jurisdictional delineation was not conducted as part of the biological survey effort; however, wetlands and waters potentially subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) based on mapped vegetation were identified. Refer to Figure 3.3-2, *Potential Jurisdictional Features*, for the locations of potentially jurisdictional features associated with wetland vegetation communities as well as wetlands identified in the National Wetlands Inventory. These potentially jurisdictional resources occur within open space areas primarily along the western edge of campus and in a small area in the southeastern corner of campus.

3.3.1.3 Sensitive Plant and Animal Species

Sensitive plant and animal species (also referred to as “special-status species”) include those listed as Threatened or Endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) or under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or the Native Plant Protection Act; Species of Special Concern identified by CDFW; and plants occurring on Ranks 1 and 2 of the California Native Plant Society’s (CNPS) California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) system. CNPS Ranks 3 and 4 species are considered watch list species and while not afforded special status or recognition by the USFWS or CDFW, they may be considered sensitive by local jurisdictions. CNPS ranks plants from 1 to 4 based on rarity and conservation status, with Rank 1 and 2 species considered rare in California, Rank 3 species requiring additional review, and Rank 4 species of limited distribution. CNPS Ranks 3 and 4 are included as sensitive in this analysis. Within Rank 1, CNPS distinguishes between List 1A species, which are presumed no longer found in the wild in California, and List 1B species, which are rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere. CNPS-ranked species are further assigned a threat rank of .1, .2, or .3, indicating whether the species is seriously, moderately, or not very threatened in California, respectively. Sensitive plant and animal species within the biological study area include species either

Mesa College
Study Area
Open Space Easements
City of San Diego MHPA

Vegetation

Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub
Disturbed Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub
Disturbed Land
Disturbed Southern Willow Scrub
Eucalyptus Woodland
Scrub Oak Chaparral*
Disturbed Wetland
Developed

Animals

Coastal California Gnatcatcher (Polioptila californica californica)

Plants

San Diego Barrel Cactus (Ferocactus viridescens) - Planted
Shaw's Agave (Agave shawii) - Planted
Torrey Pine (Pinus torreyana ssp. torreyana) - Ornamental
Ashy Spikemoss (Selaginella cinerascens)
San Diego County Sunflower (Bahiopsis laciniata)
Nuttall's Scrub Oak (Quercua dumosa)

* Nuttall's Scrub Oak found throughout scrub oak chaparral habitat in the southwestern portion of the study area.



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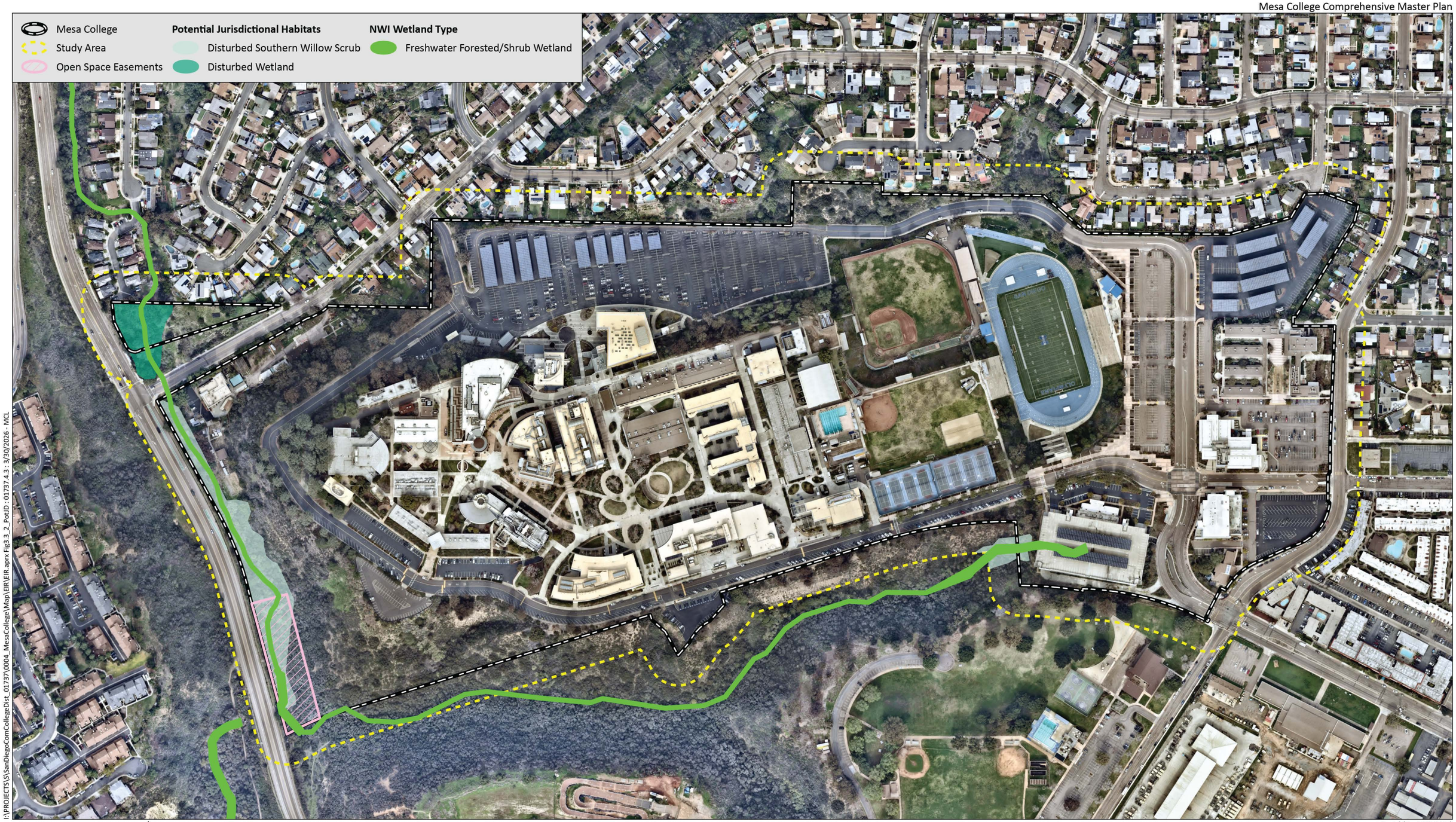
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Source: Aerial (SanGIS 2023)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Vegetation and Special-Status Species

Figure 3.3-1



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Source: Aerial (SanGIS 2023)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Potential Jurisdictional Features

Figure 3.3-2

observed or documented during biological surveys or species listed with a potential to occur based on the presence of suitable habitat or known occurrences in the project vicinity.

Sensitive plant and animal species observed or documented within the biological study area include six plant species (Nuttall's scrub oak [*Quercus dumosa*], Torrey pine [*Pinus torreyana*], San Diego barrel cactus [*Ferocactus viridescens*], Shaw's agave [*Agave shawii*], ashy spike moss [*Selaginella cinerascens*], and San Diego sunflower [*Bahiopsis laciniata*]) and two animal species (coastal California gnatcatcher [*Polioptila californica californica*] and osprey [*Pandion haliaetus*]). Documented locations of these species are shown in Figure 3.3-1, except for osprey locations which were not observed during surveys for the project. Raptors were also observed on campus including red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*).

There are no additional sensitive plant species with a moderate or high potential to occur due to lack of suitable soils or due to documented absence during times the species would have been apparent if present. Sensitive animal species that were not observed but have a moderate or high potential to occur include three species (Cooper's hawk [*Astur cooperii*], Belding's orange-throated whiptail [*Aspidoscelis hyperythrus beldingi*], and San Diegan legless lizard [*Anniella stebbinsi*]). A summary of the sensitive plant and animal species that either occur or have a moderate to high potential to occur within the biological study area is included in Table 3.3-2, *Sensitive Plant and Animal Species*. Focused surveys for Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*) were conducted in accordance with CDFW guidance during the species' active period. The species was not observed, and survey results indicate it is absent from the study area.

Table 3.3-2
SENSITIVE PLANT AND ANIMAL SPECIES

Common Name	Status	Description	Documentation
Plant Species			
Nuttall's scrub oak	CNPS 1B.1	Occurs in chaparral with a relatively open canopy in flat terrain (also found in coastal scrub). On north-facing slopes, may grow in dense monotypic stands. Found on sandy or clay loam soils. Widely distributed throughout the scrub oak chaparral habitat mapped in the study area.	Observed during surveys
Torrey pine	CNPS 1B.2	Found in Torrey pine woodlands and southern maritime chaparral. Multiple Torrey pines have been planted on the Mesa College campus.	Observed during surveys
San Diego barrel cactus	CNPS 2.1	Optimal habitat for this cactus appears to be Diegan coastal sage scrub hillsides, often slopes crests growing among cobbles. Multiple individuals of San Diego barrel cactus have been planted on the Mesa College campus.	Observed during surveys
Shaw's agave	CNPS 2.1; MSCP Covered, Narrow Endemic	Occurs on coastal sage scrub and maritime succulent scrub, often on volcanic soils. Multiple individuals of Shaw's agave are planted on the Mesa College campus.	Observed during surveys
ashy spike moss	CNPS 4.1	Found on flat mesas in coastal sage scrub and chaparral. This species was observed growing within Diegan coastal sage scrub in the study area.	Observed during surveys

Common Name	Status	Description	Documentation
San Diego sunflower	CNPS 4.2	Occurs within Diegan coastal sage scrub where shrub cover is more open than at mesic, and coastal locales supporting sage scrub. Multiple individuals of San Diego sunflower have been planted on the Mesa College campus.	Observed during surveys
Animal Species			
coastal California gnatcatcher	FT/SSC; MSCP Covered	Typically occurs in arid, open sage scrub habitats on gently sloping hillsides to relatively flat areas at elevations below 3,000 feet. This species was observed within the Diegan coastal sage scrub habitat in the study area.	Observed during surveys
Osprey	CDFW WL	Typically restricted to large water bodies such as rivers, lakes, and reservoirs supporting fish with suitable nesting habitat such as rocky pinnacles or large trees and snags. Build large nests, often in dead tops of older trees and artificial structures. Nesting has been documented on campus.	Observed previously by Mesa College staff
Cooper's hawk	CDFW WL; MSCP Covered	Typically found in forests, riparian areas, suburban and urban areas. Nests within dense woodlands and forests and in isolated trees in open areas. The study area is an urban area and has mature eucalyptus woodland that could potentially support nesting by this species.	High potential to occur
Belding's orange-throated whiptail	CDFW SSC; MSCP Covered	Typically occurs in coastal sage scrub, chaparral, edges of riparian woodlands, and washes. Also occurs in weedy, disturbed areas adjacent to these habitats. Important habitat requirements include open, sunny areas, shaded areas, and abundant insect prey base, particularly termites. Coastal sage scrub and disturbed land occur in the study area and provide suitable habitat for this species.	High potential to occur
San Diegan legless lizard	CDFW SSC	Typically occurs in areas with loose soil, particularly in sand dunes and or otherwise sandy soil. Generally found in leaf litter, under rocks, logs, or driftwood in oak woodland, chaparral, and desert scrub, including coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats. This species has been previously reported from within the study area.	High potential to occur

CDFW = California Department of Fish and Wildlife; CNPS = California Native Plant Society; FT = Federally threatened; MSCP = City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program; SSC = Species of Special Concern; WL = Watch List

3.3.1.4 Wildlife Corridors and Linkages

Wildlife corridors and habitat linkages facilitate the movement and dispersal of plant and animal species between habitat areas. Local corridors provide access to resources such as food, water, and shelter, while regional corridors support movement over larger areas and contribute to genetic exchange between populations. A wildlife corridor is a specific route used for movement or migration, whereas a habitat linkage represents a broader area that supports movement between habitat blocks. Linkages may function as stepping-stone connections across fragmented landscapes.

The biological study area is not within an identified local or regional wildlife corridor or habitat linkage, as defined by the City of San Diego (City) Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP). The Mesa College campus is largely developed with buildings, parking areas, internal circulation, lighting, and human activity that limit its ability to support wildlife movement. Open space areas located south and west of the campus are constrained by surrounding development and roadways (e.g., Genesee Avenue and Marlesta Drive), which further restrict connectivity. These areas may provide limited foraging opportunities or temporary stopover habitat for common wildlife species and migratory birds and may offer minor connectivity to larger undeveloped areas within the City's Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) to the south (Figure 3.3-1). However, the study area is not identified as a regional wildlife corridor or habitat linkage, and does not function as a corridor for sustained wildlife movement.

3.3.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, District, and local regulations that pertain to biological resources is provided below. There are no regional regulations that would be applicable to the project.

3.3.2.1 Federal

Endangered Species Act

Administered by the USFWS, the FESA provides the legal framework for the listing and protection of species (and their habitats) that are identified as being endangered or threatened with extinction. Actions that jeopardize endangered or threatened species and the habitats upon which they rely are considered a "take" under the FESA. FESA Section 9(a) defines take as "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct." "Harm" and "harass" are further defined in federal regulations and case law to include actions that adversely impair or disrupt a listed species' behavioral patterns.

The USFWS designates critical habitat for endangered and threatened species. The goal is to restore healthy populations of listed species within their native habitats, so they can be removed from the list of threatened or endangered species. Once an area is designated as critical habitat pursuant to the FESA, federal agencies must consult with the USFWS to ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to result in the destruction or adverse modification of the critical habitat. No critical habitat designated by the USFWS for federally listed endangered species is mapped within or adjacent to the project site.

Sections 7 and 10(a) of the FESA regulate actions that could jeopardize endangered or threatened species. Section 7 generally describes a process of federal interagency consultation and issuance of a biological opinion and incidental take statement when federal actions may adversely affect listed species. Section 10(a) generally describes a process for the preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan and issuance of an incidental take permit.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

All migratory bird species that are native to the United States or its territories are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), as amended under the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004. The MBTA is generally protective of migratory birds but does not stipulate the type of protection required. In common practice, the MBTA is used to place restrictions on disturbance of active bird nests

during the nesting season (generally February 15 to August 31). In addition, the USFWS commonly places restrictions on disturbances allowed near active raptor nests.

Clean Water Act

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates impacts to waters of the U.S. under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). The purpose of the CWA is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of all waters of the U.S. A federal CWA Section 404 Permit would be required for a project to place fill in waters of the U.S. Projects impacting waters of the U.S. could be permitted on an individual basis or be covered under one of several approved nationwide permits. Individual permits are assessed individually based on the type of action, amount of fill, etc. Individual permits typically require substantial time (often longer than one year) to review and approve, while nationwide permits are pre-approved if a project meets appropriate conditions.

A CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification administered by the RWQCB must be issued prior to issuance of a Section 404 Permit. The RWQCB reviews projects for consistency with the achievement of water quality objectives and the reasonable protection of beneficial uses designated in the applicable Water Quality Control Plan. Collectively, wetland and water resources regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and RWQCB are referred to as waters of the state, and these resources may or may not include waters of the U.S.

3.3.2.2 State

California Endangered Species Act

Similar to the FESA, the CESA of 1970 provides protection to species considered threatened or endangered by the State of California (California Fish and Game Code [CFG Code] Section 2050 et seq.). The CESA recognizes the importance of threatened and endangered fish, wildlife, and plant species and their habitats, and prohibits the taking of any endangered, threatened, or rare plant and/or animal species unless specifically permitted for education or management purposes.

The CESA established that it is state policy to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance state endangered species and their habitats. Under state law, plant and animal species may be formally designated rare, threatened, or endangered by official listing by the California Fish and Game Commission. The CESA authorizes that private entities may "take" plant or wildlife species listed as endangered or threatened under the FESA and CESA, pursuant to a federal Incidental Take Permit if the CDFW certifies that the incidental take is consistent with the CESA (CFG Code Section 2080.1[a]). For state-only listed species, CFG Code Section 2081 authorizes the CDFW to issue an Incidental Take Permit for state-listed threatened and endangered species if specific criteria are met.

Native Plant Protection Act

Sections 1900–1913 of the CFG Code (Native Plant Protection Act) direct the CDFW to carry out the state legislature's intent to "…preserve, protect, and enhance endangered or rare native plants of this state." The Native Plant Protection Act gives the California Fish and Game Commission the power to designate native plants as "endangered" or "rare" and protect endangered and rare plants from take.

California Fish and Game Code

The CFG Code provides specific protection and listing for several types of biological resources. Pursuant to CFG Code Section 3503, it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by the CFG Code or any regulation made pursuant thereto. Raptors and owls and their active nests are protected by CFG Code Section 3503.5, which states that it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird unless authorized by the CDFW. CFG Code Section 3513 states that it is unlawful to take or possess any migratory non-game bird as designated in the MBTA. These regulations could require that construction activities (particularly vegetation removal or construction near nests) be reduced or eliminated during critical phases of the nesting cycle unless surveys by a qualified biologist demonstrate that nests, eggs, or nesting birds will not be disturbed, subject to approval by CDFW and/or USFWS.

Under CFG Code Sections 1600 et. seq., CDFW regulates activities that would divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake that supports fish or wildlife and requires a Streambed Alteration Agreement for such activities. The CDFW issues a Streambed Alteration Agreement with any necessary mitigation to ensure the protection of the state's fish and wildlife resources. The CDFW has jurisdiction over riparian habitats associated with watercourses.

CFG Code Section 2800 et. seq., known as the Natural Community Conservation Planning (NCCP) Act, is intended to conserve, protect, restore, and enhance natural communities. It promotes the protection of natural communities at the ecosystem scale while accommodating compatible land uses. CDFW is the principal state agency implementing the NCCP program. NCCPs developed in accordance with this program provide for comprehensive management and conservation of multiple wildlife species and identify and provide for the regional or area-wide protection and perpetuation of natural wildlife diversity while allowing compatible and appropriate development and growth.

3.3.2.3 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

The District's Design Guidelines and Standards Manual establishes District-wide requirements for the design and construction of campus improvements. The manual includes specific tree and plant protection requirements that apply to construction work. These standards require that construction activities avoid and minimize damage to existing trees and vegetation through measures such as:

- Installation of protective fencing a minimum of 10 feet beyond the dripline of existing trees;
- Maintenance of tree health during construction, including irrigation and monitoring by a qualified arborist;
- Restrictions on grading, root pruning, and construction activities within protected root zones;
- Use of approved methods for pruning and root management under the direction of a certified arborist; and
- Replacement of trees of equal size and value if construction-related damage occurs.

The Design Guidelines and Standards Manual also includes requirements for tree placement, species selection, and installation, including minimum setbacks from infrastructure, use of approved or low-maintenance species, and standards for planting and establishment.

3.3.2.4 Local (Non-Regulatory)

Although the District is not subject to City biological resources protection regulations or programs, adjacent MHPA lands and City trees could be indirectly affected by future campus projects and were considered in the project analysis. For purposes of this analysis, areas located more than approximately 100 feet from MHPA lands and separated by developed features or roadways are not expected to experience measurable adverse effects from construction-related noise, lighting, or human activity and are not considered adjacent for evaluation of indirect impacts. An overview of some of the City's biological resources protection policies is provided below.

City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program

The MSCP is a regional habitat conservation planning program developed pursuant to the State of California's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act and the FESA. The MSCP provides a framework for the long-term conservation of sensitive species and habitats within southwestern San Diego County while allowing for compatible development. The program establishes the MHPA, which is a preserve system designed to protect core biological resources, maintain habitat linkages, and support covered species. The MSCP identifies a suite of "covered species," including federally and state-listed species as well as other sensitive species, for which conservation is addressed at a regional scale. Projects located outside of the MHPA are subject to the City's MSCP Subarea Plan requirements, including avoidance and minimization measures where applicable, and consistency with the overall conservation strategy.

The City of San Diego implements the MSCP through its Subarea Plan, which identifies development standards, biological impact avoidance measures, and mitigation requirements applicable to projects within the City's jurisdiction. The District is not an enrolled agency in the Natural Communities Conservation Planning program and the MSCP does not apply to District projects carried out within the Mesa College campus. While a portion of the MHPA south of the campus appears to be mapped on campus property (Figure 3.3-1), inclusion of these lands in the City's MHPA does not constitute an obligation on the part of the District to comply with the City's MSCP preservation goals or objectives. The closest MHPA to the Mesa College campus occurs south of the southeast corner of campus while additional MHPA lands to the west of campus are separated from the study area by Genesee Avenue.

City of San Diego Public Tree Protection Policies

The City has various policies and regulations regarding trees in public rights-of-way (ROWs) or that contribute to the City's "Community Forest." The Public Tree Protection Policy (Council Policy 900-19) establishes rules to safeguard trees located in public ROWs, City-owned parks and open spaces, and certain private lands under open-space easements. While protected trees are generally preserved, the policy permits removal when a tree poses a public safety hazard and reasonable corrective measures have been exhausted. The City's Planting of Trees on City Streets Policy (Council Policy 200-05) establishes guidelines for planting, maintaining, and removing street trees within the City's jurisdiction. Depending on the jurisdiction of the tree or the condition of a tree, the removal may occur at public expense or in accordance with a no-fee permit for removal. Lastly, Article 2, Division 6 of the San Diego

Municipal Code establishes the City's rules for planting, maintaining, protecting, and removing trees and other vegetation within public ROWs, defining "street" broadly to include public streets, alleys, lanes, and parkways.

3.3.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential biological resources impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant biological resources impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS;

2. Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the CDFW or USFWS;

3. Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the CWA (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;

4. Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites;

5. Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; or

6. Conflict with provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

3.3.4 Impact Analysis

3.3.4.1 Special-Status Species

Threshold 1: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Direct Impacts

As discussed in Section 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.3, the project site supports sensitive vegetation communities, including disturbed southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, scrub oak chaparral, and Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed) and sensitive plant species including Nuttall's scrub oak, Torrey pine, San Diego barrel cactus, Shaw's agave, ashy spike moss, and San Diego sunflower. The Diegan coastal

sage scrub within the project site could support coastal California gnatcatcher and this species was observed in the southwestern part of the campus, outside of areas where future projects are anticipated. While not observed, there is also the potential for Cooper's hawk to occur in suitable nesting habitat (eucalyptus woodland and individual trees) that could be affected by CMP implementation. Osprey has been observed nesting within developed portions of the campus and could be directly affected by removal of trees or structures (e.g., lighting fixtures) used for nesting.

The CMP identifies future projects within developed areas of the existing campus; however, direct impacts to special-status plant species (Nuttall's scrub oak, Torrey pine, San Diego barrel cactus, Shaw's agave, ashy spike moss, and San Diego sunflower) and special-status animal species (California gnatcatcher and Cooper's hawk) cannot be ruled out as future projects could occur within any part of the campus, including natural areas. As a result, implementation of the CMP could result in direct impacts to these special-status plant and animal species if they occur within sensitive areas of the campus. On the other hand, direct impacts to nesting birds protected under the MBTA could occur within developed portions of the campus, primarily where development would occur within or adjacent to areas vegetated with existing trees.

While Belding's orange-throated whiptail and San Diegan legless lizard have a potential to occur in the project vicinity, substantial adverse effects to these species are not anticipated due to the limited suitable habitat present within the campus, the preservation of suitable habitat with the nearby MHPA, and their low sensitivity within the region.

Indirect Impacts

Implementation of the CMP could result in indirect impacts to sensitive vegetation communities and special-status species located adjacent to development areas, particularly near the MHPA (refer to Figure 3.3-1). Potential indirect impacts include degraded water quality from runoff, dust deposition on vegetation, introduction or spread of invasive species, increased human activity along habitat edges, noise disturbance to wildlife, artificial lighting effects, and brush management activities.

Water quality and erosion impacts would be minimized through compliance with applicable stormwater regulations, including preparation and implementation of Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans (SWPPPs) and adherence to RWQCB requirements (see Section 3.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*). Fugitive dust would be controlled through standard dust suppression measures required by air quality regulations (e.g., San Diego County Air Pollution Control District [SDAPCD] Rule 55 addressing Fugitive Dust Control; see Section 3.2, *Air Quality*). Brush management within the required zones surrounding newly proposed structures would be considered part of the impact area for those individual projects and, if brush management results in removal of sensitive habitat, mitigation could be required.

Future CMP projects located adjacent to the MHPA or other undeveloped areas containing vegetation could increase edge effects, including increased human access, introduction of invasive species, and disturbance to sensitive wildlife from noise and lighting. The potential for these indirect effects would be particularly relevant where development occurs within 100 feet of habitat supporting sensitive species, including coastal California gnatcatcher.

Project-Level

Direct Impacts

Development of the near-term projects would occur in developed areas that do not include sensitive vegetation communities, plants, or habitat that supports special status plant or animal species. However, as noted for the program-level above, osprey has been observed nesting within developed portions of the campus. Specifically, osprey has been observed near the Upper Athletic Field, which is within the area proposed for development as part of the Athletics Complex project. Construction activities could also result in direct effects to nesting birds protected under the MBTA, if vegetation removal or disturbance of existing trees occurs during the nesting season.

Indirect Impacts

The near-term projects would be constructed within developed and disturbed areas of campus and are located over 300 feet from the MHPA and other sensitive habitats. As such, near-term project construction and operation activities would not result in indirect impacts such as edge effects, noise disturbance, lighting spillover, or introduction of invasive species to sensitive biological communities. Compliance with existing regulatory requirements and standard construction practices would further minimize the potential for temporary indirect effects such as water quality degradation and fugitive dust.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP has the potential to result in direct and indirect impacts to special-status species. **Program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Project-Level

Although the near-term projects are located in developed areas, they have the potential to result in direct impacts to special-status species (osprey) and nesting birds. **Project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**. Indirect impacts would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

Buffer distances identified in the mitigation measures below are intended as guidance for avoidance of potential impacts and may be adjusted by a qualified biologist based on site conditions, species characteristics, and applicable agency guidance.

BIO-1 **Sensitive Vegetation Mapping.** For those projects for which the site is mapped (Figure 3.3-1) as supporting a sensitive vegetation type and vegetation mapping has not been conducted on the site in the preceding five years, updated vegetation mapping shall be conducted by a qualified biologist as part of the project planning and environmental review process to confirm the location and extent of sensitive vegetation communities within the project footprint.

BIO-2 **Sensitive Plant Surveys.** Updated sensitive plant surveys shall be conducted for all projects that would be located within sensitive habitat (Diegan coastal sage scrub, disturbed Diegan coastal sage scrub, disturbed southern willow scrub, scrub oak chaparral, or disturbed wetland) and that have not been surveyed for plants within the preceding year. Sensitive plant surveys shall be conducted by a qualified biologist during the appropriate season for detecting the species as part of the project design phase, typically spring and summer. Surveys shall be conducted on foot, employing a level of effort sufficient to provide comprehensive coverage. If sensitive plant species are observed, they shall be avoided by adjusting the project boundary if feasible, although avoidance will not be required for planted specimens. If impacts cannot be avoided through project design, the impacts to those species must be evaluated and any significant impacts shall be mitigated by on-site or off-site plant salvage and relocation, restoration (which must include the impacted species in the plant palette at a minimum 1:1 ratio), and/or purchase of mitigation bank credits, as determined appropriate by a qualified biologist and consistent with resource agency guidance, as applicable.

BIO-3 **Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys**. During the project planning process for projects located within 500 feet of Diegan coastal sage scrub habitat (including disturbed), coastal California gnatcatcher surveys shall be conducted 7 to 10 days apart in accordance with the current USFWS protocol to determine presence/absence of the species. Surveys may be conducted either on a project-specific basis, or on a programmatic level in portions of the campus likely to be subject to disturbance in the relatively near (within one year) future. The permittee shall submit the 15-day pre-survey notification to the USFWS Carlsbad Permits Division, including an explanation that three, six (February 15-August 31), or nine (September 1-February 14) surveys will be conducted, depending on the location on campus and the time of year, and that the District will mitigate all impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub at least a 1.5:1 ratio, regardless of whether or not the impacted area is occupied by gnatcatcher. Documentation of the survey results shall be provided to USFWS in accordance with current protocol survey guidelines.

BIO-4 **Coastal California Gnatcatcher Habitat Mitigation**. If habitat within a proposed impact area is determined to be occupied by the coastal California gnatcatcher, the District shall contact USFWS to discuss project permitting options, if impacts cannot be avoided to the satisfaction of the USFWS. This could be accomplished through either Section 7 or Section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act. Impacts to the coastal California gnatcatcher and gnatcatcher-occupied habitat shall be avoided/mitigated by the following measures (additional measures could be required as a result of the consultation/permitting process):

i. Diegan coastal sage scrub occupied by gnatcatcher shall not be removed during the gnatcatcher breeding season (February 15 through August 31). If gnatcatchers are not present, then only mitigation for the habitat loss will be required as described in mitigation measure BIO-18, and habitat clearing can occur at any time of the year following the survey.

ii. If construction activities will commence during the gnatcatcher breeding season (February 15 through August 31) and gnatcatchers are found within 500 feet of the grading limits based on the survey to determine presence/absence required by mitigation measure BIO-3, an acoustical technician shall be consulted to identify appropriate measures for reducing construction noise levels to 60 dBA L_{EQ} or ambient, whichever is higher, during the breeding season. If noise reduction measures are

determined to be necessary, the acoustical technician or a qualified biologist shall confirm, through noise measurements, that noise attenuation measures are effective at maintaining noise at or below the specified threshold where gnatcatchers are nesting.

iii. Impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub (regardless of gnatcatcher occupancy) shall be mitigated at least a 1.5:1 ratio by preserving areas on-site or completing compensatory mitigation off-site as described in mitigation measure BIO-18.

BIO-5 **Raptor Nesting Surveys**. To avoid potential impacts to active raptor nests, if construction commences during the raptor nesting season (generally January 15 through July 31), pre-construction surveys for such nests shall be performed by a qualified biologist within 500 feet of proposed construction activities no more than seven days prior to the initiation of construction. Construction activities within 500 feet of an identified active raptor nest shall not commence during the breeding season until a qualified biologist determines that the nest is no longer active or appropriate avoidance measures have been implemented. Trees with inactive nests can be removed outside of the breeding season without causing an impact.

BIO-6 **General Avian Nesting Surveys**. No grubbing, trimming, or clearing of vegetation (including brush management) shall occur during the general avian breeding season (February 15 through August 31). If grubbing, trimming, or clearing cannot feasibly occur outside of the general avian breeding season (September 1 to February 14), a qualified biologist shall perform a pre-construction nesting bird survey no more than seven days prior to the commencement of vegetation clearing or grubbing to determine if active bird nests are present in the affected areas. Should an active migratory bird nest be located, the project biologist shall direct vegetation clearing away from the nest until it has been determined by the project biologist that the young have fledged, or the nest has failed. If there are no nesting birds (includes nest building or other breeding/nesting behavior) within the proposed impact area, clearing, grubbing, and grading shall be allowed to proceed.

BIO-7 **Pre-Construction Training**. For projects that are proposed within 100 feet of City-designated MHPA, a pre-construction meeting shall be held between the project manager, project biologist, and construction crews prior to construction to ensure crews are informed of the sensitivity of habitats in the MHPA. Prior to commencement of clearing or grading activities within 100 feet of the MHPA, appropriate fencing as determined during the project design phase (e.g., silt fencing, orange construction fencing, and/or chain link fencing) shall be installed around the approved limits of disturbance to prevent errant disturbance of sensitive biological resources by construction vehicles or personnel. Installation of fencing to demarcate the approved limits of disturbance shall be verified by the project biologist prior to initiation of clearing or grading activities. All movement of construction contractors, including ingress and egress of equipment and personnel, shall be limited to designated construction zones. This fencing shall be removed upon completion of all construction activities.

If errant construction activities result in inadvertent impacts to MHPA lands outside of the approved limits of disturbance, such impacted areas shall be evaluated and quantified by a qualified biologist and revegetation options shall be coordinated with City of San Diego staff. Errant construction impacts to non-sensitive vegetation communities shall be revegetated with an appropriate native erosion control seed mix. Errant construction impacts to wetland vegetation communities and native upland vegetation communities shall be restored to the pre-

impact vegetation community in addition to providing any additional mitigation required to meet the mitigation ratio specified and requirements outlined in mitigation measures BIO-3 and BIO-4.

BIO-8 **Construction Staging**. For projects within 50 feet of the MHPA boundary, no temporary storage or stockpiling of construction materials shall be allowed within the MHPA, and all staging areas for equipment and materials shall be located at least 50 feet from the edge of these areas. Staging areas and construction sites in proximity to the MHPA will be kept free of trash, refuse, and other waste; no waste dirt, rubble, or trash will be deposited in these areas. The proper use and disposal of oil, gasoline, diesel fuel, antifreeze, and other toxic substances during and after construction shall be enforced by the District.

BIO-9 **Construction Fire Prevention**. Equipment to extinguish small brush fires (e.g., from trucks or other vehicles) shall be present on site during all phases of project construction, along with personnel trained in the use of such equipment. Smoking shall be prohibited in construction areas adjacent to flammable vegetation.

BIO-10 **Construction Night Lighting**. Night lighting shall not be used during construction unless determined to be necessary to avoid conflicts with other campus uses. If night lighting is necessary, lights shall be directed away from sensitive vegetation communities to the greatest extent practicable and shielded to minimize temporary lighting of the surrounding habitat.

BIO-11 **Shot Hole Borer Prevention**. The following Best Management Practices shall be implemented for each project that would remove or install tree species on campus that may be used as host trees by Shot Hole Borers (SHB). Kuroshio SHB known host plants include western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), red willow (*Salix laevigata*), arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), western cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), black willow (*Salix gooddingii*), mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.), avocado (*Persea americana*), cork oak (*Quercus suber*), coral tree (*Erythrina humeana*), black poplar (*Populus nigra*), black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), and strawberry snowball tree (*Dombeya cacuminum*). Source: http://eskalenlab.ucr.edu/shotholeborerhosts.html:

i. Trees to be installed on campus shall be obtained from a reliable source and be free of sign of SHB infestation;

ii. An education program for on-site workers responsible for tree installation shall be implemented. The program shall describe the signs of SHB infestation (e.g., sugary exudate on trunks or branches, and SHB entry/exit holes [approximately the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen]);

iii. Sign of SHB infestation shall be reported to the CDFW and UC Riverside's Eskalen Lab (www.eskalenlab.ucr.edu) by the Project Manager and/or the project biologist;

iv. Trees with sign of SHB infestation shall be pruned or removed, as appropriate, and potential host materials shall be chipped to less than one inch prior to composting on site or transfer to a landfill;

v. Equipment that is used to prune or remove SHB-infected trees shall be disinfected prior to additional use.

vi. Biologists monitoring mitigation sites shall be knowledgeable regarding signs of SHB infestation.

BIO-12 Biological Monitoring. For projects proposed within sensitive habitat or determined to require biological monitoring based on subsequent CEQA review, during project construction, a biological monitor shall visit the construction site at least weekly during site preparation and rough grading activities and monthly following completion of rough grading, until construction is completed. During site visits, the monitor shall be responsible for ensuring that the construction activities and staging areas are restricted to the approved limits of work, and protective fencing is adequately maintained. The monitor shall also be responsible for ensuring that the contractor adheres to the other provisions described in applicable biological mitigation measures. The monitor, in cooperation with the on-site construction manager, shall have the authority to halt construction activities in the event that these provisions are not met. Biological monitors shall submit regular reports to the District during construction documenting the implementation of all applicable grading and construction minimization measures.

BIO-13 Pesticide Management.

i. Integrated Pest Management principles shall be implemented to the extent practicable for areas adjacent to the MHPA for chemical pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Examples of such measures may include, but are not limited to, alternative weed/pest control measures (e.g., hand removal) and proper application techniques (e.g., conformance to manufacturer specifications and legal requirements).

ii. Irrigation for project landscaping shall be minimized and controlled in areas in and adjacent to the MHPA through efforts such as designing irrigation systems to match landscaping water needs, using sensor devices to prevent irrigation during and after precipitation, and using automatic flow reducers/shut-off valves that are triggered by a decrease in water pressure from broken sprinkler heads or pipes.

BIO-14 Non-Invasive Landscaping.

i. Appropriate landscaping shall be selected based on the vegetation communities within and around the project site. In areas supporting native (or disturbed native) vegetation communities, revegetation of impacted slopes shall be with appropriate native plant materials.

ii. Only non-invasive plant species shall be included in the landscape plans for campus and individual campus projects (species not listed on the California Invasive Plant Inventory prepared by the Cal-IPC). A qualified landscape architect and/or qualified biologist shall review landscape plant palettes prior to implementation to ensure that no invasive species are included.

iii. Any planting stock brought onto a project site within 100 feet of the MHPA for landscaping or habitat restoration shall be inspected to ensure it is free of pest species that could invade natural areas, including but not limited to Argentine ants and South

American fire ants. Inspections of planting stock for habitat restoration shall be by a qualified biologist, and inspections of planting stock for landscaping shall be the responsibility of a qualified District Project Manager or their designated individual. Any planting stock found to be infested with such pests shall be quarantined, treated, or disposed of according to best management practices by qualified personnel, in a manner that precludes invasions into natural habitats.

BIO-15 Permanent Lighting. Lighting adjacent to the MHPA shall be selectively placed, shielded, and directed to minimize potential impacts to sensitive species. In addition, lighting from buildings or parking lots/structures abutting the MHPA shall be shielded and/or screened by vegetation to the extent feasible.

BIO-16 MHPA Intrusion Prevention.

i. Projects directly adjacent to the MHPA shall install open space signage along the boundary of the preserve, indicating the presence of lands supporting sensitive habitat.

ii. Projects directly adjacent to the MHPA shall install fencing or other visual/physical barriers (such as appropriate landscaping) to discourage human encroachment into the preserve in areas where trespass is likely to occur (gradual slopes; areas of low, open vegetation; areas of previous disturbance, etc.).

iii. Maintenance of storm water facilities shall be conducted in a manner to minimize impacts to adjacent sensitive habitats. Maintenance within or adjacent to sensitive habitats shall be overseen by a qualified biologist and occur outside the general bird breeding season which extends from February 15 through August 31.

Project-Level

Mitigation measures BIO-5 and BIO-6 would apply to the near-term projects.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-16 would reduce program-level impacts to special-status species to a level that is **less than significant**.

Project-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-5 and BIO-6 would reduce project-level impacts to special-status species to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.3.4.2 Sensitive Habitats

Threshold 2: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Four vegetation communities that occur within the biological study area are considered sensitive: disturbed southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, scrub oak chaparral, and Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed). Implementation of the projects proposed in the CMP would occur primarily within previously developed and landscaped areas of the campus. However, sensitive vegetation communities are present within and adjacent to the campus, particularly along canyon slopes and undeveloped portions of the Mesa College property. While no specific improvements are currently proposed to expand campus facilities into sensitive vegetation communities, future projects could encroach into these communities where improvements occur near the edge of existing development or require grading or utility connections through these areas.

Impacts to sensitive vegetation communities are considered significant if they exceed applicable regulatory thresholds (e.g., greater than 0.1 acre for uplands or 0.01 acre for wetlands), or if they substantially degrade the function or value of these communities. As such, future campus development projects that result in the permanent removal of sensitive vegetation communities could have substantial adverse effects on a sensitive natural community.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would occur within developed and previously disturbed areas of the campus and would not result in direct effects on sensitive vegetation communities mapped within the biological study area. No removal or disturbance of mapped sensitive vegetation communities is proposed. Given the absence of direct impacts and the location of proposed improvements within developed areas, the near-term projects would not have a substantial adverse effect on a sensitive natural community.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP has the potential to result in a substantial adverse effects on sensitive vegetation communities. **Program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Project-Level

Implementation of the near-term projects would not adversely affect sensitive vegetation communities. **Project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

Mitigation measure BIO-1, provided above, would require updated sensitive vegetation mapping.

BIO-17 Sensitive Vegetation Avoidance. During the project planning phase, site plans shall be designed to minimize impacts to sensitive vegetation communities to the extent feasible. Such minimization efforts shall include consideration of:

i. Use of retaining walls to minimize grading impacts, to the extent possible from an engineering and visual impact standpoint.

ii. Locations, widths, design features, and construction methods of any new trails or overlook areas shall carefully consider how to avoid and minimize impacts to sensitive vegetation communities (e.g., routing trails along canyon rims rather than through canyons, cantilevered overlook platforms, using bridges to avoid wetland vegetation communities, clearing trails by hand). To the extent practicable, a 50-foot buffer shall be provided between permanent development and wetland vegetation.

iii. Priorities for avoidance (in descending order of sensitivity) shall be placed on wetland vegetation communities, scrub oak chaparral, and Diegan coastal sage scrub, particularly if these vegetation communities are determined to support sensitive species.

BIO-18 Compensatory Habitat Mitigation. Mitigation for impacts to sensitive upland vegetation communities shall consist of preservation of habitat, habitat creation, and/or enhancement, or combination thereof on the Mesa College property or off campus through habitat acquisition and preservation, or purchase of credits from an approved conservation bank, at a 2:1 ratio for scrub oak chaparral and 1.5: 1 ratio for Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed). Mitigation for impacts to upland communities shall be in-kind.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1, BIO-17, and BIO-18 would reduce program-level impacts to sensitive vegetation communities to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.3.4.3 Wetlands

Threshold 3: Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the CWA (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Wetland vegetation communities and other waters potentially subject to the jurisdiction of USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW are present within the undeveloped portions of the campus, primarily in canyons and drainage features (refer to Figure 3.3-2). Although no specific development projects are currently proposed within potentially jurisdictional features, future development could result in adverse effects to these features through grading, infrastructure installation, or drainage modifications. The Western Entrance Reconfiguration project could also result in adverse effects to potentially jurisdictional features that occur adjacent to the Genesee Avenue and Marlesta Drive intersection. Future campus projects affecting more than 0.01 acre of wetland habitat would have substantial adverse effects on protected wetlands and would be required to undergo permitting according to the regulations of the applicable regulatory agency(ies).

Project-Level

The near-term projects would occur within developed areas of the campus and would not result in direct or indirect effects on jurisdictional waters or wetlands. No potentially jurisdictional features have been identified within the near-term project impact footprints and no substantial adverse effects on wetlands would occur.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP has the potential to affect protected wetlands and would require compliance with applicable permitting processes. **Program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Project-Level

Implementation of the near-term projects would result in adverse effects on protected wetlands. **Project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

BIO-19 Compensatory Wetland Mitigation. Mitigation required for wetland and waters impacts shall be determined during regulatory permitting. Wetland impacts typically require a minimum 1:1 creation component to ensure no net-loss of these communities pursuant to the regulatory requirements, except in circumstances where 1:1 creation is not required by the regulatory

agencies. Wetland mitigation shall occur on or off Mesa College property through creation, restoration, enhancement, and/or preservation, or combination thereof, or through purchase of credits at an approved wetland mitigation bank. The District shall contact the appropriate permitting agencies (USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW as determined following the jurisdictional delineation conducted under mitigation measure BIO-20) to discuss project permitting requirements and the following shall apply:

A detailed wetland restoration plan shall be prepared for all projects requiring wetland mitigation (except for mitigation met through purchase of credits from an approved wetland mitigation bank). The plan shall include, at a minimum, the proposed location of the mitigation area(s), site preparation, plant palette, success criteria, monitoring requirements and other details of the habitat restoration effort, and be prepared by a qualified biologist. The plan would be subject to approval by the corresponding regulatory permitting agencies (USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW) as part of the regulatory permitting process.

The District may choose to mitigate wetland impacts on a project-by-project basis, or to create an advance wetland mitigation area, whereby wetland habitat is created or enhanced in advance of anticipated impacts. Advance mitigation is subject to approval by the regulatory agencies. Wetland habitat has been mapped to the west of the campus and there is potential for restoration in this area. Mitigation activities shall be undertaken only where the habitat would be considered to be viable in the long-term, given the other surrounding uses planned by the CMP. Wetland mitigation shall be subject to approval by the corresponding regulatory agencies.

BIO-20 Jurisdictional Delineation. During the project planning process, if a project site has vegetation that is mapped as potential wetlands (including disturbed southern willow scrub and disturbed wetland), or the project site contains or is located immediately adjacent to a natural drainage course identified by a biologist during subsequent mapping, a qualified biologist shall conduct a jurisdictional delineation. The jurisdictional delineation shall use current regulatory guidance to identify the presence of potential regulated waters and wetlands in the project vicinity. If there is potential for the project to adversely affect wetlands or waters, impacts shall be avoided and minimized to the extent practicable, and unavoidable impacts shall be mitigated through implementation of mitigation measure BIO-19, as applicable, and conformance with applicable regulatory permit conditions.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-19 and BIO-20 would reduce program-level impacts to wetlands to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.3.4.4 Wildlife Corridors

Threshold 4: Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Although undeveloped land occurs to the west and south of the Mesa College campus, these areas are surrounded by development, including residential development and roads. Therefore, as described further in Section 3.3.1.4, these areas do not function as wildlife corridors or linkages that support sustained wildlife movement. As such, implementation of the CMP would not interfere with a wildlife corridor.

Project-Level

The near-term projects are within the existing developed campus and these areas do not function as wildlife corridors or linkages that support sustained wildlife movement. Therefore, the near-term projects would not interfere with a wildlife corridor.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not interfere with wildlife corridors. There would be **no program-level or project-level impact**. No mitigation is required.

3.3.4.5 Local Policies or Ordinances

Threshold 5: Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The District's Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes enforceable requirements for the protection of existing trees and vegetation during construction, including installation of protective fencing, maintenance of tree health, restrictions on disturbance within root zones, and replacement of damaged trees. Future campus improvements would be required to comply with these District standards as part of project design and construction to preserve existing trees. Specific tree removal and re-planting details for future campus projects would be identified during project planning to maintain the overall landscaping present on campus.

If improvements with City ROWs occur, specifically near campus entrances, City tree preservation/street tree policies would apply. If such work would result in the disturbance of City trees, the District would be required to coordinate with the City to obtain permits to allow trimming or removal of public trees depending on the tree type and location. No conflicts with local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources would occur.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be required to comply with District standards, including tree preservation policies in the District's Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, as part of project design and construction. While some existing trees would be removed, those that are intended to remain in place would be protected through adherence to these policies. No conflicts with local policies or ordinances protection biological resources would occur.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP would not conflict with wildlife applicable local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources. **Program-level or project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.3.4.6 Conservation Plans

Threshold 6: Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The Mesa College campus is not subject to the City's MSCP nor is the District an enrolled agency in the Natural Communities Conservation Planning program. Therefore, the MSCP is not applicable to District properties. However, the MSCP was taken into account during the preparation of the biological resources analysis prepared for the CMP, including species and vegetation community sensitivities and mitigation ratios. The impact analysis provided above also considers the potential for indirect effects on the sensitive habitats in the MHPA. No conflicts with an adopted habitat conservation plan would occur.

Project-Level

As is the case at the program level, the near-term projects are not subject to the City's MSCP or another habitat conservation plan and no conflicts would occur.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not conflict with an adopted habitat conservation plan. There would be **no program-level or project-level impact**. No mitigation is required.

3.3.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope for the biological resources cumulative analysis is San Diego County. In 1991, the State of California passed the NCCP Act, providing for the long-term, regional conservation of natural vegetation and wildlife diversity. The MSCP Plan is the framework NCCP plan for southwestern San

Diego County. The USFWS and CDFW jointly adopted the MSCP Plan in 1997. As part of that approval process, a Joint Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared, which addressed the cumulative impacts to biological resources from growth in the San Diego region. While the Mesa College campus is not a part of the MSCP planning effort or a formal part of the MSCP study area and the District is not an enrolled agency in the NCCP program, the Final MSCP Plan (City 1998) and its associated Joint EIR/EIS (City and USFWS 1996) were considered in the cumulative analysis below as they address regionwide biological resources impacts from development.

3.3.5.1 Special-Status Species

As described in the Joint EIR/EIS prepared for the MSCP Plan, implementation of the MSCP Plan would result in cumulatively significant direct impacts to its 85 covered species; however, assembly and management of the MHPA would reduce these cumulative impacts below a level of significance (City and USFWS 1996). Biological surveys conducted on campus found four MSCP-covered species in the biological study area, including three plant species (Shaw's agave [planted/not naturally occurring], San Diego barrel cactus [planted/not naturally occurring], and Torrey pine [planted/not naturally occurring]) and one animal species (coastal California gnatcatcher). Note that planted vegetation within developed areas does not function as self-sustaining native habitat and does not contribute to regional populations. Two additional MSCP-covered species were considered to have high potential to occur in the biological study area (Belding's orange-throated whiptail and Cooper's hawk). Of the 85 species covered in the MSCP Plan, the CMP would potentially contribute to impacts to six of those species. With implementation of mitigation measures identified to address these impacts and continued implementation of the regional habitat conservation network, incremental impacts to special-status species associated with the CMP **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.3.5.2 Sensitive Habitats and Wetlands

Cumulative development projects within or adjacent to areas containing sensitive habitat have the potential to result in the cumulative loss of sensitive habitats or natural communities. Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, could contribute to the loss of some native vegetation communities in the San Diego region; however, mitigation would be implemented that would result in no net loss of these communities on a regional scale. As such, CMP impacts related to sensitive habitats **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.3.5.3 Wetlands

Cumulative development projects within or adjacent to wetlands have the potential to result in the cumulative loss of wetlands without adherence to regulatory permit requirements. Implementation of the CMP has the potential to result in adverse effects on small areas of wetland habitats that are potentially jurisdictional, though compensatory mitigation would be provided such that the overall availability of these habitats would not decrease. Other cumulative development projects would also be required to implement mitigation according to permit conditions prescribed by the regulatory agencies. Therefore, CMP impacts related to protected wetlands **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.3.5.4 Wildlife Corridors

Cumulative development projects occurring within existing wildlife corridors and inhibiting movement through these areas have the potential to result in the cumulative loss of wildlife corridors and associated breeding areas. As discussed above, the biological study area is not identified as a regional

wildlife corridor as open space areas near campus are intersected by existing development. Therefore, implementation of the CMP **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to impacts related to wildlife corridors.

3.3.5.5 Local Policies or Ordinances

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would be required to comply with the District's tree planting and preservation policies, and, where applicable, the City's tree policies. Cumulative development projects would also be required to comply with the applicable local policies protecting biological resources. Compliance with these local policies would ensure that development does not result in the cumulative loss of local biological resources such as trees. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to conflicts with local policies or ordinances would be **less than significant**.

3.3.5.6 Conservation Plans

As part of the MSCP planning process, lands were identified for assembly into a comprehensive preserve for the conservation of biological resources. That preserve is referred to as the MHPA and was cooperatively designed by the participating jurisdictions and special districts in the MSCP study area in partnership with the wildlife agencies (CDFW and USFWS), property owners, and representatives from private industry and environmental groups. The MHPA conserves vacant land, including habitat and other vacant lands that contribute to the preserve design. As noted above, implementation of the MSCP Plan would result in cumulatively significant direct impacts to the 85 covered species (City and USFWS 1996). Assembly and management of the MHPA as part of the MSCP and other NCCP plans would reduce these cumulative impacts to less than significant levels. Cumulative indirect impacts to native vegetation communities associated with edge effects and increased development pressure outside the MHPA were not considered significant due to the measures in the plans that address these effects. While the future campus projects would not be subject to the MSCP, nearby cumulative development projects would be required to adhere to the applicable regulations of the MSCP or applicable subarea plan. As such, the CMP contribution to significant cumulative impacts related to the MSCP **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.4 Cultural Resources

This section addresses the potential cultural resources impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to cultural resources are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analyses in the Archaeological Technical Report (HELIX 2026a) and Historic Resources Survey Report (HELIX 2026b), provided as Appendix D and Appendix E to the PEIR, respectively.

3.4.1 Environmental Setting

Cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures, or objects, each of which may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, and/or scientific importance. Significant cultural resources are designated as "historical resources," and are defined per Public Resources Code (PRC) 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5. For the purposes of this PEIR, discussion of historical resources is divided between built environment or historic resources, which consist of historic buildings, structures, objects, or sites, and archaeological resources, which refers to prehistoric or historic archaeological resources or human remains.

Cultural resources cannot be adequately evaluated without first taking into consideration the historic context(s) with which they are associated. The cultural history in San Diego County (County) presented below is based on documentation from both the archaeological and ethnographic records and represents a continuous human occupation in the region spanning the last 10,000 years. While this information comes from the scientific reconstructions of the past, it does not necessarily represent how the Kumeyaay see themselves. While the material culture of the Kumeyaay is contained in the archaeological record, their history, beliefs and legends have persevered and are retained in the songs and stories passed down through the generations. It is important to note that Native American aboriginal lifeways did not cease at European contact. Protohistoric refers to the chronological trend of continued Native American aboriginal lifeways at the cusp of the recorded historic period in the Americas. More detailed historic contexts are provided in the Archaeological Technical Report and Historic Resources Survey Report, provided as Appendix D and Appendix E to the PEIR, respectively.

3.4.1.1 Prehistoric Period

Prior to historic and modern activities, the project vicinity would have consisted of grassland communities and coastal sage scrub on the mesa, with stands of riparian vegetation within major drainages such as along the San Clemente, Rose, and Tecolote canyons. The riparian community would have consisted of plants such as sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), and willow (*Salix* spp.). Major wildlife species found in this environment prehistorically were coyote (*Canis latrans*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*), mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), rabbit (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), and various rodents, the most notable of which are the valley pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), and dusky footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*). Acorns and grass seeds were staple vegetal food resources in the Late Prehistoric Period in southern California. Rabbits, jackrabbits, and rodents were important to the prehistoric diet as well; deer were somewhat less significant for food but were an important source of leather, bone, and antler. In addition, many of the plant species naturally occurring in the project vicinity are known to have been used by native populations for medicine, tools, ceremonial, and other uses.

3.4.1.2 Ethnohistoric Period

The Ethnohistoric Period, sometimes referred to as the ethnographic present, commenced with the earliest European arrival in what is now San Diego and continued through the Spanish and Mexican periods and into the American period. The founding of Mission San Diego de Alcalá in 1769 brought about profound changes in the lives of the Kumeyaay. Many of the coastal Kumeyaay died from introduced diseases or were brought into the mission system; however, some Kumeyaay were displaced inland, to the east, and many remained within the project vicinity. Earliest accounts of Native American life in what is now San Diego were recorded as a means to salvage scientific knowledge of native lifeways. These accounts were often based on limited interviews or biased data collection techniques. Later researchers and local Native Americans began to uncover and make public significant contributions in the understanding of native culture and language. These studies have continued to the present day and involve archaeologists and ethnographers working in conjunction with Native Americans to address the continued cultural significance of sites and landscapes across the County.

The project site is located within the traditional territory of the Kumeyaay, also known as Ipai, Tipai, or Diegueño (named for Mission San Diego de Alcalá). At the time of Spanish contact, Yuman-speaking Kumeyaay bands occupied southern San Diego and southwestern Imperial counties and northern Baja California. The Kumeyaay are a group of exogamous, patrilineal territorial bands who lived in semisedentary, politically autonomous villages or rancherias. Most rancherias were the seat of a clan, although it is thought that, aboriginally, some clans had more than one rancheria and some rancherias contained more than one clan. Several sources indicate that large Kumeyaay villages or rancherias were located in river valleys and along the shoreline of coastal estuaries. They subsisted on a hunting and foraging economy, exploiting San Diego's diverse ecology throughout the year; coastal bands exploited marine resources while inland bands might move from the desert, ripe with agave and small game, to the acorn and pine nut rich mountains in the fall.

At the time of Spanish colonization in the late 1700s, several major Kumeyaay villages were located in proximity to the project site. The closest was the village of *La Rinconada de Jamo* (Rinconada), located approximately 2.75 miles to the west, where the Rose Canyon drainage enters into Mission Bay. Another nearby village was the village of *Cosoy*, located along the south side of the San Diego River near the location of the San Diego Presidio and the first location of the Mission de Alcalá, approximately 3.5 miles south of the project site. Both of these village locations were documented as inhabited at the inception of Spanish colonization when they were visited by the Spanish during the Portolá expedition in 1769. A third nearby village, located upriver along the north side of the San Diego River, was the village of *Nipaquay* at the second and final location of the San Diego Mission de Alcalá, approximately four miles southeast of the project site. A fourth nearby village, indicated to also be located along the lower San Diego River, was the village of *Sinyeweche* to the east of the village of *Nipaquay*.

The presence of these Kumeyaay villages at or near the locations of these early Spanish facilities was not accidental. The Spaniards chose these locations because there were native villages present in proximity. Some native speakers referred to river valleys as *oon-ya*, meaning trail or road, describing one of the main routes linking the interior of San Diego with the coast. For example, the floodplain from the San Diego Mission de Alcalá to the ocean was *hajir* or *qajir*. It is likely that the Kumeyaay people used the San Diego River valley, as well as Rose Canyon and its tributaries, as travel corridors from interior coastal plain areas, to and from villages located along, and at the mouth of, the river, such as *Cosoy, La Rinconada de Jamo, Nipaquay*, and *Sinyeweche* as well as other villages along the coast to the north of the river and the project site, including *Ystagua*, *Peñasquitos*, and *Pawai/Pawaii/Paguay*.

Archaeological Record

Archaeological evidence indicates that the earliest well-documented prehistoric occupation in the San Diego region dates to the San Dieguito Tradition, beginning more than 9,000 years ago. This tradition is generally characterized by a subsistence emphasis on hunting, with diagnostic artifacts including elongated bifaces, scrapers, crescentics, and leaf-shaped projectile points.

The San Dieguito Tradition was followed by occupations during the Archaic Period (circa 8600–1300 Before Present), represented locally by the La Jolla complex along the coast and the Pauma complex inland. These complexes are part of the Encinitas Tradition and Early Milling Stone Horizon and reflect a shift toward a more generalized subsistence economy with an increased emphasis on plant resources, particularly seeds, as well as shellfish and small game. Archaic Period sites are most common along the coast, near estuaries, and in near-coastal valleys, and are less frequent in inland foothill areas. Artifact assemblages from this period are dominated by milling implements such as manos and metates, along with cobble tools and a range of other stone, bone, and ornamental artifacts.

The Late Prehistoric Period (circa 1500 Before Present to Common Era 1769) is marked by notable changes in technology, subsistence, and social organization, including higher population densities. In San Diego County, this period is represented by the San Luis Rey complex in the north and the Cuyamaca complex in the south. Late Prehistoric assemblages commonly include arrow points, pottery (notably Tizon Brownware), milling tools, and mortars and pestles. Subsistence strategies emphasized acorns and grass seeds, supplemented by small game, with larger game, fish, and shellfish playing secondary roles, except in coastal settings. Settlement patterns are interpreted as seasonally occupied villages supported by a central-based collecting strategy.

3.4.1.3 Historic Period

There are three general eras in California history: the Spanish, Mexican, and American periods.

Spanish Period

While Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo visited San Diego briefly in 1542, the beginning of the historic period in the San Diego area is generally given as 1769. In the mid-eighteenth century, Spain had escalated its involvement in California from exploration to colonization and, in that year, a Spanish expedition headed by Gaspar de Portolá and Junípero Serra established the Royal Presidio of San Diego. Portolá then traveled north from San Diego, seeking suitable locations to establish military presidios and religious missions to extend the Spanish Empire into Alta California.

Initially, both a mission and a military presidio were located on Presidio Hill overlooking the San Diego River. A small pueblo, now known as Old Town San Diego, developed below the presidio. The Mission San Diego de Alcalá was constructed in its current location five years later. The missions and presidios stood, literally and figuratively, as symbols of Spanish colonialism, importing new systems of labor, demographics, settlement, and economies to the area. Cattle ranching, animal husbandry, and agriculture were the main pursuits of the missions.

Mexican Period

Although Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, Spanish patterns of culture and influence remained for a time. The missions continued to operate as they had in the past, and laws governing the

distribution of land were also retained in the 1820s. Following the secularization of the missions in 1834, large ranchos were granted to prominent and well-connected individuals, ushering in the Rancho Era, with the society making a transition from one dominated by the church and the military to a more civilian population, with people living on ranchos or in pueblos. With the numerous new ranchos in private hands, cattle ranching expanded and prevailed over agricultural activities. These ranches put new pressures on California's native populations, as grants were made for inland areas still occupied by the Kumeyaay, forcing them to acculturate or relocate farther into the backcountry. In rare instances, former mission neophytes were able to organize pueblos and attempt to live within the new confines of Mexican governance and culture. The most successful of these was the Pueblo of San Pasqual, located inland along the San Dieguito River Valley, founded by Kumeyaay who were no longer able to live at the Mission San Diego de Alcalá.

Land was also granted to pueblos with locally elected town councils. In 1833, San Diego submitted a petition to Governor Figueroa asking for formal recognition as a pueblo and, in 1834, was granted permission to establish a municipal government. However, partially due to the establishment of the ranchos in the backcountry areas and the subsequent population shift to the ranchos, San Diego's population shrunk from nearly 500 people in 1834 to 150 in 1841. Consequently, the town council was replaced by a justice of the peace in 1838. A few years later, in 1845, the town was allowed a governor-appointed sub-prefect, Santiago Arguello, who commissioned a survey of the pueblo lands; the resulting map was signed by Governor Pio Pico in 1846, establishing the pueblo as a 58,875-acre swath of land. The project area is situated entirely within the pueblo lands.

American Period

American governance began in 1848, when Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ceding California to the United States at the conclusion of the Mexican-American War. An influx of settlers to California and the San Diego region occurred during the American Period, resulting from several factors, including the discovery of gold in the state, the end of the Civil War, the availability of free land through the passage of the Homestead Act, and, later, the importance of San Diego County as an agricultural area supported by roads, irrigation systems, and connecting railways. The increase in American and European populations quickly overwhelmed many of the Spanish and Mexican cultural traditions and greatly increased the rate of population decline among Native American communities.

While the American system required that the newly acquired land be surveyed before settlement, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo bound the United States to honor the land claims of Mexican citizens who were granted ownership of ranchos by the Mexican government. The Land Act of 1851 established a board of commissioners to review land grant claims, and land patents for the land grants were issued throughout the following years. In 1874, San Diego received a land patent for 47,323 acres, which was slightly less than the size of the original pueblo lands, partially due to 1,233 acres within Point Loma being assigned as a military reservation.

In the early years of the American Period, Old Town remained the center of civic life in the area; however, the San Diego River was prone to major floods and, in the 1870s, downtown San Diego, then known as Horton's Addition, become the urban center. The San Diego River, however, remained the main source of water for the growing town. While the first attempt to build a dike to route the San Diego River into what was then known as "False Bay" (now known as Mission Bay) occurred in the 1850s, it was not until the 1870s that a more permanent channel was constructed.

In the late 1860s, Alonzo Horton began the development of New San Diego and began the shift of commerce and government centers from Old Town (San Diego pueblo) to New Town (now downtown). Development from downtown San Diego initially began to spread eastward, in part by following natural transportation corridors. The following decades saw "boom and bust" cycles that brought thousands of people to the County. In the Clairemont area, a short-lived real estate boom occurred in the late 1880s: the boom started slowly in 1885 and peaked in 1887.

By the end of the 1880s, many of the newcomers to San Diego had left, although some remained to form the foundations of small communities based on dry farming, orchards, dairies, and livestock ranching. In the 1890s, the City of San Diego (City) entered a time of steady growth, and subdivisions surrounding downtown were developed. As the City continued to grow in the early twentieth century, the downtown's residential character changed. Streetcars and the introduction of the automobile allowed people to live farther from their downtown jobs, and new suburbs were developed.

A pause in development occurred in the Clairemont area during the early 1900s as a direct result of a shift towards military-focused infrastructure, with the community remaining largely undeveloped throughout the 1920s. During the early part of that decade, oil speculators drilled several wells and installed oil derricks within the Clairemont Mesa area; these included areas just east of Morena, near Mesa College, and Northern Clairemont.

In the 1940s, military housing was developed in Linda Vista, south of the project site. As part of the housing development, the federal government extended water and sewer pipelines to the Linda Vista area and improved public facilities. From Linda Vista, urban development spread north to the Kearny Mesa area, then to the Clairemont area. The development in Clairemont was primarily residential-based and Clairemont, colloquially named "The City Within a City," had close to 80 subdivisions platted within the area between 1950 and 1956. These, along with nearly three dozen commercial and residential tracts, were developed by Louis Cowley Burgener and Carlos Tavares. Due to its distance from downtown San Diego, Clairemont included commercial business and retail shopping, schools, libraries, and other amenities.

In 1948, the Cabrillo Parkway, now State Route (SR) 163, was constructed as U.S. Highway 395. Plans to expand construction eastward began in early 1956 as Tavares and Burgener sought to connect Clairemont to Highway 395. East Clairemont, surrounded by Tecolote Canyon to the west, Burford Street/Tamres Drive/Mesa College to the south, Interstate (I-) 805 to the east, and SR 52 to the north, provided direct access. Clairemont and East Clairemont provided housing for many individuals working and stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar or working in the aerospace industry

3.4.1.4 Campus History

Mesa College opened in 1962 as the second campus in the District. Six historic contexts were identified for the evaluation of built resources on the Mesa College campus. The contexts are organized chronologically and capture major patterns and trends in the campus' development history that are expressed in its extant built resources. Within some contexts are one or more themes that provide a focus related to a particular property type. The full historic context statement for Mesa College is provided in Appendix E. In summary, the contexts and themes associated with the campus are as follows:

- **History of the San Diego Community College District.** The District, formally established in 1972, consists of three credit-granting institutions and a continuing education center, the oldest of which is San Diego City College, which opened in 1914. The others consist of Mesa College, which opened in 1962; Miramar College, which opened in 1969; and the Educational Cultural Complex, which opened in 1976. This context describes the history of the District, starting with the opening of San Diego Junior College in 1914, through the modern day.

- **Early Settlement and Development in Linda Vista and Clairemont.** The communities of Linda Vista and Clairemont both date to World War II, when the aircraft manufacturing industry in San Diego boomed. Linda Vista has its roots in the Linda Vista Housing Project, one of the first projects to be initiated under the Lanham Defense Housing Act of 1940, while Clairemont grew out of a series of subdivisions built and sold to military families.

- **Campus Development.** The Mesa College campus currently consists of approximately 45 buildings and/or structures, over half of which were built within the first two decades of Mesa College's operation. Currently, 32 extant buildings and one structure are more than 40 years of age.

- **Social and Cultural Development.** This context discusses the social and cultural development of Mesa College. First, the Civil Rights Movement and the subsequent rise of student activism and prominent student groups on campus is discussed, followed by a discussion of the creation of Mesa College's ethnic studies program and student support services.

- **Architecture and Design.** This context provides an overview of the predominant architectural styles, International (circa 1925-1965), Brutalism (circa 1950-1970), and Post-and-Beam (circa 1950-1970), which are found on the Mesa College campus. For each style, a list of character-defining features is presented to help in both identification and to help guide the evaluation of buildings and structures that may have significance for embodying the characteristics of a specific architectural style and/or form.

- **Architects.** Original building plans and other District records indicate that five different architecture firms designed the extant buildings and structures at Mesa College that were constructed between 1954 and 1985 (40 years of age or older). The firms include the following: Frank L. Hope & Associates; Earl F. Gibson; William A. Richardson; Richard J. Lareau & Associates; and Delawie, Macy & Henderson.

3.4.1.5 Archaeological Resources

HELIX conducted a record search of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) for the project site and a surrounding 0.5-mile radius at the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC) on February 18, 2025. The records search results indicated that six cultural resources have been previously recorded within the search radius; however, no archaeological resources were identified. None of the previously recorded resources were identified within or adjacent to the project site and all of the previously recorded resources are built environment resources consisting of historic-era buildings and the historic-era alignment of Highway 395.

A pedestrian survey of the project site was conducted on February 28, 2025, by HELIX staff archaeologist James Turner, with Kumeyaay Native American monitor Javier Dominguez from Red Tail Monitoring &

Research. As much of the project site is heavily developed, the survey focused on areas of open ground. No archaeological resources were observed during the field survey.

3.4.1.6 Built Environment Resources

HELIX prepared a campus-wide historic context statement and conducted a historic resource survey of all buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes on the campus in 2025 for buildings and structures that were constructed through 1985. While the age threshold for listing of historic resources is typically 50 years, the scope of the survey included buildings and structures constructed through 1985 to provide a look-ahead at resources that may become eligible in the next 10 to 15 years. While this PEIR evaluates campus growth over a 20-year horizon, the historic resources survey focused on buildings and structures constructed through 1985 to avoid premature evaluation of more recent resources that do not yet have sufficient historical perspective for evaluation of such resources in historic context. As described in Section 3.4.1.4, six distinct contexts were identified for the campus, though they are not intended to be restrictive as a resource may be significant under multiple contexts and/or themes. For example, a particular resource may be significant as representing important trends in campus planning and design while also being an excellent example of a particular architectural style.

In summary, three resources, three individual buildings and one historic district, were determined eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR) and are therefore considered historical resources for the purposes of CEQA: Fine Arts building (Building FA); Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage (Building P2; two buildings); and Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6; six buildings). Character-defining features are the visual and physical qualities that give a building its distinctive identity and that relate it to an area or period of significance. These features may include the overall building shape, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details and features, and aspects of its site and environment. Each of the historical resources and its character-defining features are described further below.

Fine Arts Building

The Fine Arts building (Building FA; previously I300) was designed by Frank L. Hope & Associates as part of the later expansion of the campus buildings in the 1970s. The building opened in 1977 as the Life Science/Student Personal Administration Building and was later repurposed for the current fine arts and art gallery use. The building is a noteworthy example of the Brutalist architectural style.

The building is laid out on an irregular plane with four levels that step up an approximate 50-foot slope from north to south. Exterior walls are a combination of exposed, smooth finish concrete and sections of smooth cement plaster. Primary roofs are flat with concrete parapets; small roof decks are located on levels three and four.

The main entrance elevation faces north and exhibits all four levels. This elevation expresses an asymmetrical façade that steps from levels four to three east to west. A small first level entrance extension on the west side protrudes to the north with a shed roof covered in flat tile and a mural on the façade, “Art Gallery.” The westerly portion of the second level, and easterly portion of levels three and four, on the north elevation, are punctuated by horizontal bands of replacement spandrel glazing. A large, recessed void occupies the first and second levels at the east side. A distinctive semicircular projection extends to the west on the fourth level. Both sides of the building feature open stairways to

the fourth level, with solid exposed concrete railings that extend around radial landings and create an elegant counterpoint to the more monolithic, horizontal building elements.

The east and west elevations of the building feature predominantly solid concrete and cement plaster-clad walls as they step up the slope. The east elevation exhibits wall voids at the third and fourth levels, with one window at the third level and a set of windows and doors at the first level entrance projection. The west elevation does not contain any voids but features a window and door to access the roof deck on the fourth level, as well as one window at the third level and a set of windows and doors at the first level entrance projection.

The south elevation features only the fourth level façade. This elevation is slightly asymmetrical with a flat roof, and primarily blank walls clad in cement plaster. A large quarter-circular roof parapet that screens roof-mounted equipment is visible beyond the edge of the roof and features a painted mural. A set of glazed entrance doors and transom occurs at the east end, and the open stairway element is visible beyond. Other solid entrance doors occur on this elevation. The original glazed greenhouse in the center of the south elevation has been re-roofed in corrugated metal and re-clad in metal mesh screening.

The building exhibits character-defining features of the Brutalist style, including an exposed and expressive structural system; monumental massing; angular and rectangular forms; unpainted, exposed smooth concrete and cement plaster dominating visible elevations; and the intentional avoidance of traditional elements and ornament. As is typical with the Brutalist style, the building also expresses the character-defining features of bold, oversized, angular shapes with sculptural and distinctive geometric forms to break apart the rectangular form, especially notable in open stairways and circular roof elements.

The Fine Arts building (Building FA) is the only Brutalist style building constructed within the historic period (prior to 1986). Frank L. Hope & Associates is considered a master architect by the City. The building is a noteworthy example of Brutalism, exhibiting all of the style's character-defining features. Spandrel glazing was replaced within original openings on the north elevation in 2018-2019, and the small greenhouse element on the south elevation was reclad at the same time. These alterations are minor given that all other key building elements appear to be intact. Thus, the building retains integrity and is able to convey its architectural significance. The building is also representative of master architect Frank L. Hope & Associates' body of work, which includes the former Jack Murphy/Qualcomm Stadium (nonextant). Therefore, the building possesses significance at the local level and is recommended individually eligible under CRHR Criterion 3 (Architecture). The period of significance is 1977, the year of construction.

Character-Defining Features

- Brutalist details including:
    - Exposed and expressive structural system
    - Monumental massing
    - Angular and rectangular forms
    - Unpainted, exposed smooth concrete and cement plaster dominating visible elevations

  - Intentional avoidance of traditional elements and ornament
  - Bold oversized angular shapes with sculptural and distinctive geometric forms to break apart the rectangular form, especially notable in open stairways and circular roof elements

- Irregular plan with four levels that step up an approximate 50-foot slope from north to south.
- Flat roofs with concrete parapets; small roof decks located on levels three and four.

Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage Buildings

The Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage (Building P2) comprises two adjacent buildings located between Mesa College Circle and Marlesta Drive and west of Building P1, which contains classrooms. The buildings were designed by Richard J. Lareau & Associates as part of the later expansion of the campus buildings in the 1970s. The buildings opened in 1976 as Landscape Buildings to support programming and provide storage adjacent to Building P1, the Ornamental Horticulture Facility built in 1967 (Building P1 is now a classroom building and not eligible for listing because it is not a noteworthy example of Ranch style with a Polynesian bungalow form). The Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2) are noteworthy examples of the Post-and-Beam architectural style.

The buildings are set on a northeast to southwest axis. The northeasterly building is rectangular in plan at dimensions of 44 feet wide and 20 feet deep. It was described as a patio building on the original as-built plans. The southwesterly building is a shorter rectangle at just over 29 feet wide and 20 feet deep and was described as a storage building. Access to the buildings during the survey was limited for some elevations due to proximate fencing and mature vegetation. However, key features of the building designs were visible and discernible by referencing the as-built plan details.

The storage building is constructed of 4-inch by 8-inch posts that support five 4-inch by 14-inch beams under a flat roof. Two additional 4-inch by 14-inch beams under 42-inch roof overhangs at the east and west ends are supported by 3-inch by 12-inch ledger beams along the sides of the building and extend 1.5 feet beyond the roof. The 4-inch by 14-inch beams extend beyond the north and south walls to support two-foot roof overhangs and 36-inch-deep open trellises topped by 2-inch by 4-inch rafters, plus an additional nine inches. The exterior walls are clad in vertical grooved plywood between the exposed posts. The south elevation is blank according to the as-built plans. The north elevation features one door and two sections of horizontal wood louver vents that extend to the roof. The west and east elevations feature the same plywood cladding, with a person door and a wider roll-up door.

The patio building is similarly constructed of 4-inch by 8-inch posts, supporting seven 4-inch by 14-inch beams under a flat roof. The structure is further supported by cross braces in the last sections at the building corners. Two additional 4-inch by 14-inch beams under 42-inch roof overhangs at the east and west ends are supported by 3-inch by 12-inch ledger beams along the sides of the building and extend 1.5 feet beyond the roof. The 4-inch by 14-inch beams extend beyond the north and south walls to support two-foot roof overhangs and 36-inch-deep open trellises topped by 2-inch by 4-inch rafters, plus an additional nine inches. Two skylights, approximately 7.5 feet by 4 feet, are centered in the roof toward the east and west ends. The exterior north wall is clad in vertical grooved plywood between the exposed posts up to the ledger beams. Chain link covers the openings under the roof on this elevation, and may cover all of the south wall openings. The west and east ends are open and enclosed by chain link fence and gate panels.

The buildings exhibit character-defining features of the Post-and-Beam style, including the direct expression of their wood-framed structural system involving heavy posts and beams; horizontal massing; flat roofs with deep overhangs; repetitive façade geometry; no solid load bearing walls; absence of applied decoration; open interior floor plans; and wood exterior finish materials. The buildings do not feature floor-to-ceiling glass or strong interior/exterior connections, but this is due to their completely functional purpose as storage buildings.

The Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage (Building P2) comprises two of three Post-and-Beam buildings constructed on the campus within the historic period (prior to 1986). The only other Post-and-Beam building is Building D3, which contains classrooms and was built in 1981. Building D3 is not noteworthy because it does not express key features of the Post-and-Beam style; it also was not designed by a master architect. The architecture firm for the Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage (Building P2) buildings, Richard J. Lareau & Associates, is considered a master architect by the City. The buildings are noteworthy examples of the Post-and-Beam style, exhibiting all of the style's character-defining features applicable for the use of the buildings. The only apparent changes are replacement of person doors of the storage building, and the addition of chain link at the original openings in the patio building. These alterations are minor given that all other key building elements appear to be intact. Thus, the buildings retain integrity and are able to convey their architectural significance. The buildings are also representative of master architect Richard J. Lareau & Associates' body of work which includes 5645 Taft Avenue, San Diego (City's Historic Resources Board no. 1246) and 4515 Ladera Street, San Diego (City's Historic Resources Board no. 1344). Therefore, the Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage (Building P2) buildings possess local significance and are recommended individually eligible under CRHR Criterion 3 (Architecture). The period of significance is 1976, the year of construction.

Character-Defining Features

- Two adjacent small one-story rectangular buildings
- Post-and-Beam details including:
    - Direct expression of their wood-framed structural system involving heavy posts and beams
    - Horizontal massing
    - Flat roofs with deep overhangs
    - Repetitive façade geometry
    - No solid load bearing walls
    - Absence of applied decoration
    - Open interior floor plans
    - Wood exterior finish material

Mesa College Design Center Historic District

The Mesa College Design Center, designed by Earl F. Giberson, is comprised of six buildings built in 1954: an irregular-shaped building (Building Z1), an L-shaped building (Building Z2), and four parallel, elongated rectangular buildings to the west (Buildings Z3-Z6). The buildings are connected by covered walkways supported by pipe columns, or *pilotis*. The collection of buildings embodies distinctive character-defining features of the International style, including horizontal orientation; an emphasis on simple, geometric volumes with square corners; exterior stucco; a lack of applied ornament except for the pilotis; horizontal bands of metal-framed windows; and flat roofs with parapets and cantilevered slabs. The only readily discernible exterior building modifications are wood slat roof equipment screens. The buildings are no longer used as an elementary school, but together they are a significant concentration of buildings that are linked and united aesthetically by their architectural style. Although the original elementary school use of the buildings and associated site improvements are no longer extant, the original buildings remain intact. The buildings are a noteworthy example of the International style of architecture and retain their integrity. Therefore, the Mesa College Design Center Historic District possesses local significance and is recommended eligible to be listed in the CRHR under Criterion 3 (Architecture). The period of significance is 1954, the year of construction.

Character-Defining Features

- Six one-story buildings; four parallel rectangles, one L-shape, one irregular; all one-story
- Orientation around a central courtyard
- International style details including:
    - Horizontal orientation
    - Emphasis on simple, geometric volumes with square corners
    - Stucco cladding
    - Lack of applied ornament except for the pilotis
    - Horizontal bands of metal-framed windows
    - Flat roofs with parapets and cantilevered slabs

3.4.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, and local regulations that pertain to cultural resources is provided below. No regional or District regulations regarding cultural resources apply to the project.

3.4.2.1 Federal

National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 U.S. Code 470), declared a national policy of historic preservation and instituted a multifaceted program, administered by the Secretary of the

Interior, to encourage the achievement of preservation goals at the federal, state, and local levels. The NHPA authorized the creation of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), established the position of State Historic Preservation Officer and provided for the designation of State Review Boards, set up a mechanism to certify local governments to carry out the purposes of the NHPA, assisted Native American tribes in preserving their cultural heritage, and created the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

Section 106

Section 106 of the NHPA states that federal agencies with direct or indirect jurisdiction over federally funded, assisted, or licensed undertakings must take into account the effect of the undertaking on any historic property that is included in or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP and that the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation must be afforded an opportunity to comment on such undertakings through a process outlined in 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800. The Section 106 process involves the identification of historic properties within the area of potential effect, the determination of whether the undertaking will cause an adverse effect on historic properties, and the resolution of those adverse effects through consultation with parties to the Section 106 review process, most prominently including the California State Historic Preservation Officer and Native American tribes.

National Register of Historic Places

The NRHP was established by the NHPA as "an authoritative guide to be used by federal, state, and local governments, private groups, and citizens to identify the Nation's cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment" (36 CFR Part 60.2).

The NRHP is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Properties can be significant at the local, state, or national level. To qualify for listing in the NRHP, properties generally must be at least 50 years old, possess historic significance, and retain physical integrity. To be eligible for listing in the NRHP, a property must be considered significant under one or more of the NRHP criteria, which include:

- Criterion A: associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- Criterion B: associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- Criterion C: embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represents the work of a master, or that possesses high artistic values, or that represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and/or
- Criterion D: has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting these criteria, a property must retain historic integrity, which is defined as the "ability of a property to convey its significance". To assess integrity, the National park Service recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, considered together, define historic integrity. To retain integrity, a property must possess several, if not all, of these seven qualities:

1) Location – the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred;

2) Design – the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property;

3) Setting – the physical environment of a historic property;

4) Materials – the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property;

5) Workmanship – the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory;

6) Feeling – a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time; and

7) Association – the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

3.4.2.2 State

California Environmental Quality Act

The CEQA Guidelines (Section 15064.5) address determining the significance of impacts to archaeological and historic resources. Cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures, or objects, each of which may have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, and/or scientific importance (California Office of Historic Preservation 1995). Significant resources are designated as "historical resources," and are defined per PRC Section 21084.1 and CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 as follows:

- Resource(s) listed or determined eligible by the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in the CRHR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[a][1]);

- Resource(s) either listed in the NRHP or in a "local register of historical resources" or identified as significant in a historical resource survey meeting the requirements of Section 5024.1(g) of the PRC, unless "the preponderance of evidence demonstrates that it is not historically or culturally significant" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[a][2]); or

- Resources determined by the Lead Agency to meet the Criteria for listing on the CRHR (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[a][3]).

It is important to note under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)(4), a resource may also be considered an "historical resource" for the purposes of CEQA at the discretion of the lead agency, despite ineligibility recommendations.

For listing in the CRHR, a historical resource must be significant at the local, state, or national level under one or more of the following four criteria:

1) It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;

2) It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;

3) It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values;

4) It has yielded or has the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

All resources nominated for listing must have integrity, which is the authenticity of a historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance. Resources, therefore, must retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance. Integrity is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A resource must also be judged with reference to the particular criteria under which it is proposed for nomination.

California Register of Historic Resources

Created in 1992 and implemented in 1998, the CRHR is "an authoritative guide in California to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change" (PRC Section 5024.1[a]). Certain properties, including those listed in or formally determined eligible for listing in the NRHP, and California Historical Landmarks numbered 770 and higher, are automatically included in the CRHR. Other properties recognized under the California Points of Historical Interest program, identified as significant in historic resources surveys, or designated by local landmarks programs may be nominated for inclusion in the CRHR.

A resource, either an individual property or a contributor to a historic district, may be listed in the CRHR if the State Historical Resources Commission determines that it meets one or more of the following criteria, which are modeled after the NRHP criteria:

- Criterion 1: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;

- Criterion 2: It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;

- Criterion 3: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; and/or

- Criterion 4: It has yielded or has the potential to yield information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation (PRC Section 5024.1[c]).

Under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a)(4), a resource may also be considered a "historical resource" for the purposes of CEQA at the discretion of the lead agency.

Significant resources must retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance. Resource integrity, which is the authenticity of a historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance, is evaluated with regard to the retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. In an archaeological deposit, integrity is assessed with reference to the preservation of material constituents and their culturally and historically meaningful spatial relationships. A resource must also be judged with reference to the particular CRHR/NRHP criteria under which it is proposed for eligibility.

3.4.2.3 Local (Non-Regulatory)

Pursuant to Government Code Section 53094, local City zoning and development regulations are not applicable to CMP development as implementation of the CMP would facilitate the education of community college students. While not subject to local regulations of the City, the District may consider aspects of local plans and policies for the communities surrounding the campus when it is appropriate and feasible. Relative to historical resources, City regulations regarding the evaluation, designation, and preservation of historical resources do not apply to CMP development undertaken by the District. However, localized guidance from the City relative to identification and evaluation of such resources provides relevant guidance for the District in the absence of campus-specific guidelines for identification of locally significant historic resources. As such, the City's Historical Resources Regulations and related guidance are summarized below.

San Diego Historical Resources Regulations

The purpose of the City's Historical Resources Regulations (San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 2) is to protect, preserve, and, where damaged, restore the historical resources of San Diego, which include historical buildings, historical structures, historical objects, important archaeological sites, historical districts, historical landscapes, and traditional cultural properties. These regulations are intended to ensure that development occurs in a manner that protects the overall quality of historical resources. It is further the intent of these regulations to protect the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the public, while employing regulations that are consistent with sound historical preservation principles, and the rights of private property owners. For development projects regulated by the City, these regulations apply to proposed development when the following historical resources are present on the site: designated historical resources, historical buildings, historical districts, historical landscapes, historical objects, historical structures, important archaeological sites, and traditional cultural properties.

City of San Diego Historical Resource Guidelines

The purpose and intent of the City's Historical Resources Guidelines, located in the City's Land Development Manual, are to protect, preserve, and, where damaged, restore the historical resources of San Diego. These guidelines are designed to implement the City's Historical Resource Regulations in compliance with applicable local, state, and federal policies and mandates, including, but not limited to, the City's General Plan, CEQA, and Section 106 of the NHPA. The intent of the Historical Resource Guidelines is to ensure consistency in the management of the City's historical resources, including identification, evaluation, preservation/mitigation, and development. The Historical Resource Guidelines state that if a project will potentially impact a resource 45 years or older, the resource's significance

must be determined, even if it is not listed in or previously considered eligible for the CRHR or a local register (Land Development Manual Section II.D.5).

To be designated as historic and potentially listed in the San Diego Register of Historic Resources (SDRHR), one or more of the following criteria must be met:

A. Exemplifies or reflects special elements of the City's, a community's, or a neighborhood's historical, archaeological, cultural, social, economic, political, aesthetic, engineering, landscaping, or architectural development;

B. Is identified with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;

C. Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period, or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship;

D. Is representative of the notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist, or craftsman;

E. Is listed, or has been determined eligible by the National Park Service for listing on the NRHP, or is listed or has been determined eligible by the California State Office of Historic Preservation for listing on the CRHR; and/or

F. Is a finite group of resources related to one another in a clearly distinguishable way, or is a geographically definable area or neighborhood, containing improvements that have a special character, historical interest, or aesthetic value or which represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City.

In addition to meeting one or more of the above criteria, an SDRHR-eligible resource must also retain sufficient integrity to convey its significance. Although the San Diego Municipal Code uses a 45-year threshold to review resources that may be adversely affected by development, a resource need not be 45 years of age to be eligible for listing on the SDRHR.

Eligible resources, which may include an improvement, building, structure, sign, interior element and fixture, feature, site, place, district, area, or object, are designated to the SDRHR by the City's Historical Resources Board at a publicly noticed hearing.

City of San Diego Historic Districts

The City's historic preservation program provides for the designation of individually significant resources as well as historic districts (Land Development Manual Section II.D.5). A historic district is defined by the San Diego Municipal Code as "a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are united historically, geographically, or aesthetically by plan or physical development and that have a special character, historical interest, cultural or aesthetic value, or that represent one or more architectural periods or styles in the history and development of the City" (San Diego Municipal Code Section 113.0103).

3.4.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential cultural resources impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant cultural resources impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5;

2. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5; or

3. Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries.

While historical resources are broadly defined under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 to include multiple resource types, for clarity of this impact analysis, built environment historical resources are addressed under Threshold 1 in Section 3.4.4.1 and archaeological historical resources are addressed under Threshold 2 in Section 3.4.4.2.

3.4.4 Impact Analysis

3.4.4.1 Historic Resources

Threshold 1: Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As described above in Section 3.4.1.6, the Fine Arts building (Building FA), the Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage (Building P2) buildings, and the six buildings contributing to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6) are considered historical resources under CEQA. Alteration, demolition, or incompatible development involving these resources has the potential to result in substantial adverse changes to their significance. Changes to other campus buildings that have not been identified as eligible historic resources would not result in a direct, adverse impact to historical resources. However, new construction or renovation projects adjacent to a historic resource could indirectly affect their integrity by altering their setting, feeling, and/or association.

Projects implemented under the CMP with potential to affect historic resources would generally fall into one of three categories: (1) minor alterations, (2) alterations to character-defining features, or (3) new construction adjacent to historical resources. The following impact analysis evaluates these categories by evaluating the potential for each type of activity to affect the integrity and character-defining features of historical resources.

This analysis is based on a review of campus buildings and structures constructed prior to 1985, which have sufficient historical perspective to allow for evaluation of potential significance under CEQA. Buildings and structures constructed after 1985 were not evaluated to avoid premature determinations of historical significance; therefore, the identification and evaluation of buildings and structures that age

into potential eligibility during the 20-year planning horizon would occur as part of the future, project-specific CEQA review. At the time individual campus projects are proposed, buildings and structures that have reached 45 years of age would be evaluated for potential historical significance consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 and applicable professional standards.

Minor Alterations

Projects involving routine maintenance, minor system upgrades, changes to secondary spaces (i.e., restrooms or storage spaces), or changes to spaces that as an existing condition contain no character-defining features are assumed not to result in adverse changes to the character-defining features of a historical resource.

Alterations to Character-Defining Features

A project that requires either extensive alteration (such that the resource would no longer convey its historic significance) or demolition of a historic resource would result in a substantial adverse change to that resource. Such projects may also include renovation activities that require alterations involving character-defining features, result in a change of use, or are additions that may be incompatible with the resource. While the Fine Arts building (Building FA), Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2), and buildings contributing to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6) are not specifically planned for replacement under the CMP, alterations to character-defining features could also result from renovations, additions, and/or changes in use of these buildings. The reconfiguration of circulation elements associated with the West Entrance project is shown to result in the removal of the Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2) in the CMP; however, the final design for this long-term project is not determined at this stage of planning. Therefore, implementation of the CMP has the potential to directly alter the significance of historical resources.

Projects Adjacent to a Historical Resource

New construction adjacent to a historical resource also has the potential to indirectly affect a historical resource if such new construction is incompatible with the historical resource in terms of bulk, scale, massing, height, and/or style such that the setting, feeling, and/or association of the historical resource is impaired. Therefore, implementation of CMP projects adjacent to the historical resources on campus have the potential to indirectly alter the significance of historical resources.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

A series of improvements are proposed to replace and reconfigure existing athletic, exercise science, and dance instructional and support spaces to improve connectivity and facility quality. The existing Pool, Upper Athletic Field, gym, and original Exercise Science building (Building L1) would be demolished. These existing buildings were not identified as individual historical resources or contributing buildings to the recommended eligible Mesa College Design Center Historic District. This area is also separated from such resources by intervening campus development and would not result in indirect effects. Therefore, the Athletics Complex project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

A new multi-story, 140,000-gross square foot (GSF) building is proposed on the north side of the mesa top and adjacent to the Student Services Center (Building I4). No existing buildings would be demolished to accommodate the new building; therefore, no historical resources would be directly affected. This area is also separated from eligible historical resources by intervening campus development, including the Student Services Center (Building I4), which would remain between the Fine Arts building (Building FA) and proposed building. Therefore, the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP has the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources directly through alterations to character defining features or indirectly via construction adjacent to a historical resource. **Program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Project-Level

The near-term projects, the Athletics Complex and the Performing Arts and Administrative Center and Parking Structure projects, would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. **No impact would occur at the project level**. No mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

To mitigate future potential adverse impacts to historical resources located on the Mesa College campus, the following mitigation measures apply to proposed alterations, additions, demolitions, and/or construction involving any of these resources: Fine Arts building (Building FA), Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2; two buildings), and buildings contributing to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6; six buildings).

CUL-1 **Project-level Historic Properties Project Impacts Analysis.** During initial project planning for projects that may result in changes to a historical resource, including but not limited to the Fine Arts building (Building FA), Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2; two buildings), and buildings contributing to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6; six buildings), the project plans shall be reviewed by a qualified architectural historian (meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards for Architectural History) for the potential to affect character-defining features of that resource as defined in Section 6.2.1.1 of the Historic Resources Survey Report. If the architectural historian determines that the minor changes to an eligible historic resource would result in no permanent changes to the character-defining features of the resource, no further analysis or mitigation measures are required for minor renovation projects.

For projects that may involve altering character-defining features, either directly or indirectly, a Project Impacts Analysis shall be prepared by a qualified architectural historian during the project design phase to identify potential direct and indirect impacts, as defined by CEQA, utilizing the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (Standards). If the Project Impacts Analysis concludes that the project meets the Standards, no further analysis or mitigation measures are required.

If the Project Impacts Analysis concludes that the project, as designed, does not comply with the Standards, it shall be further reviewed by the same qualified architectural historian to determine if the resource would retain its overall eligibility as a historical resource, even if the project does not strictly comply with the Standards. Examples of such projects might include change to major interior spaces that require the loss or removal of important character-defining features, or large building additions that alter a secondary façade.

The District shall also evaluate if the project can be redesigned to meet the Standards. If such project changes are determined by the District to be feasible, changes shall be incorporated into the project to the satisfaction of the qualified architectural historian and documented in the Project Impacts Analysis or a subsequent memorandum. If such changes are incorporated and the project complies with the Standards, no further analysis or mitigation measures are required.

If the project cannot be redesigned to meet the Standards, the District shall implement mitigation measure CUL-2 to document the resource and shall consider the feasibility of mitigation measures CUL-3 and CUL-4 for the project.

CUL-2 HABS or HALS Documentation for Historic Resources. The District shall commission the preparation of Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) or Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) Level II documentation by a qualified architectural historian for any historical resource that would be impacted by the project. Documentation of the existing conditions shall be undertaken prior to the commencement of construction in accordance with the Level II documentation procedures. Level II documentation shall include select existing drawings, photographs, and a written history and resource description. The HABS or HALS documentation shall be submitted to the Mesa College campus archive and to the San Diego History Center and/or to the SCIC at San Diego State University, which is the CHRIS Information Center for San Diego County.

CUL-3 Relocation of a Historical Resource. If a project would result in the unavoidable demolition or removal of a historical resource, then the District, in consultation with a qualified architectural historian, shall consider relocating the resource to an appropriate receiver site, if any such site is available, and relocation is feasible (i.e., buildings and structures of a suitable size). The receiver site shall constitute an appropriate historic setting for the relocated historical resource(s) as determined by a qualified architectural historian. For historic district contributors, the receiver site shall fall within the historic district boundaries to retain the associative qualities between the contributor and the historic district within which it is located.

CUL-4 Interpretation/Commemoration of a Historical Resource. If a project would substantially alter a historical resource, then the District, in consultation with a qualified architectural historian, shall prepare interpretive and/or commemorative materials of the building or structure. Interpretive

displays in the public areas of significant buildings, landscapes, and sites shall be installed as deemed appropriate and feasible by the District.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4 would reduce potential impacts on historic resources to the extent feasible; however, impacts would remain significant after mitigation for future projects that do not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as determined under mitigation measure CUL-1. As defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4(b)(2), "in some circumstances, documentation of a historical resource, by way of historic narrative, photographs or architectural drawings, as mitigation for the effects of demolition of the resource will not mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur." However, documentation of a historical resource through these methods can still serve to reduce the effect of the demolition of the resource, even though it does not mitigate the effects to the point where clearly no significant effect on the environment would occur. As CEQA requires that all feasible mitigation be undertaken even if it does not mitigate below a level of significance and "[i]n this context, recordation serves a legitimate archival purpose" (California Office of Historic Preservation 1999). Therefore, while mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4 would reduce potential impacts on historic resources to the extent feasible, **program-level impacts would remain significant and unavoidable**.

3.4.4.2 Archaeological Resources

Threshold 2: Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As described above in Section 3.4.1.5, no archaeological resources have been previously recorded within the project site of the surrounding 0.5-mile records search radius and no archaeological resources were identified within the project site during the field survey. Therefore, no archaeological resources within the project site were identified as historical resources per CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5, and implementation of the CMP would not result in an effect to known archaeological resources.

However, to evaluate the potential for previously unrecorded subsurface deposits to be present below existing development, an archaeological sensitivity analysis was performed for the project site. Refer to Figure 3.4-1, *Archaeological Resource Sensitivity*. Previously developed areas of campus, which cover the vast majority of the project site, are classified as having a low sensitivity for archaeological resources based on the previous disturbance for campus development as well as the lack of recorded archaeological resources in the project vicinity. It is unlikely that there would be an inadvertent discovery of archaeological resources during ground disturbance in these areas; therefore, future projects constructed within the low sensitivity areas mapped in Figure 3.4-1 would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5.

Due to dense vegetation causing poor ground surface visibility during the survey, lack of previous development, and the alluvial nature of canyons, the undeveloped portions of campus have been designated as having a moderate sensitivity for archaeological resources. This includes the open space in the southwestern portion of campus, the small campus property north of Marlesta Drive, and a small area north of the existing athletic fields where there is vegetation between campus development and adjacent residences to the north (Figure 3.4-1). Ground-disturbing activities within the moderate sensitivity areas would be limited to west entrance improvements near the Genesee Avenue/Marlesta Drive intersection and other circulation improvements along Mesa College Circle that could encroach into the moderate sensitivity areas where they border the existing roadway. The CMP does not propose expansion of campus buildings into these areas. Nonetheless, the limited ground-disturbing activities associated with the implementation of the CMP that require clearing, trenching, and/or grading in a moderate sensitivity area have the potential to damage or destroy archaeological resources that may be present on or below the ground surface. Adverse effects to significant or unique archaeological resources may result in a loss of valuable information that could be gained from the resources or prevent potentially eligible sites from being listed on a register of cultural resources. As such, projects requiring ground disturbance in moderate sensitivity areas could cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

Project-Level

The Athletics Complex project and the Performing Arts and Administrative Center and Parking Structure project are both proposed within an area identified as having low sensitivity for unrecorded archaeological resources (Figure 3.4-1). As such, these near-term projects requiring ground disturbance in low sensitivity areas would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP has the potential to result in substantial adverse changes in the significance of archaeological resources due to ground disturbing activities for projects within moderate sensitivity areas. **Program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation.**

Project-Level

The near-term projects would not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of archaeological resources. **Impacts would be less than significant at the project level**. No mitigation is required.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

CUL-5 Cultural Resources Monitoring Program. If ground disturbance is proposed within a moderate sensitivity area (PEIR Figure 3.4-1), a cultural resources monitoring program shall be implemented.



Source: Aerial (SanGIS 2023)

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HELIX Environmental Planning

Archaeological Resource Sensitivity

Figure 3.4-1

1) The District shall retain a qualified Project archaeologist and Native American monitor associated with a tribe that is traditionally and culturally affiliated (TCA) with the project area ("TCA Tribe") to implement the monitoring program, as described below. The qualified Project archaeologist shall meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (48 Federal Register 44738-39).

2) The qualified Project archaeologist and a Native American monitor shall attend the pre-grading meeting with the grading contractors to explain and coordinate the requirements of the monitoring program.

3) The monitoring program shall require that during the initial grubbing, site grading, excavation, trenching, or disturbance of the ground surface, an archaeological monitor, overseen by the qualified Project archaeologist, and a Native American monitor shall be on site full-time. The frequency of inspections shall depend on the rate of excavation, the materials excavated, and discoveries of archaeological resources or of tribal cultural resources as defined in California PRC Section 21074. Archaeological and Native American monitoring may be discontinued when the depth of grading or soil conditions no longer retain the potential to contain cultural deposits. The qualified Project archaeologist, in consultation with the Native American representative, shall be responsible for determining the duration and frequency of monitoring.

4) If unevaluated potentially significant cultural resources are discovered, construction activities shall be diverted away from the discovery until significance evaluation can be conducted and the appropriate preservation or treatment actions can be taken. All cultural material collected during monitoring and appropriate for curation shall be processed and curated at a San Diego County facility that meets federal standards per 36 Code of Federal Regulations Part 79 unless, in the case of Native American cultural material, other appropriate treatment measures such as the reburial of recovered cultural material are agreed upon by the District and the TCA Tribe.

5) After the completion of monitoring, an appropriate report summarizing the monitoring program shall be prepared. If no significant cultural resources are discovered, a brief letter shall be prepared and submitted to the District and the SCIC. If significant cultural resources are discovered, a technical report with the results of the monitoring and data recovery or treatment (including the interpretation of the data within the research context), as applicable, shall be prepared and submitted to the District and SCIC.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measure CUL-5 would reduce program-level impacts to archaeological resources to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.4.4.3 Human Remains

Threshold 3: Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Human burials have occurred outside of formal cemeteries within San Diego County, usually associated with prehistoric or precontact archaeological resource sites. Due to the low to moderate cultural resources sensitivity of the project site and the lack of prehistoric archaeological resources previously recorded within the surrounding 0.5-mile vicinity, this is considered unlikely to have occurred within campus. While low, the potential nonetheless exists for unknown burials to be present within the project site, and ground-disturbing activities associated with the implementation of future projects could have the potential to disturb human remains.

Project-Level

The near-term projects are both proposed within low archaeological resource sensitivity areas (Figure 3.4-1). Nonetheless, as described in the program-level analysis above, the potential exists for unknown burials to be present, and ground-disturbing activities associated with the implementation of the near-term projects could disturb human remains.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP has the potential to disturb human remains due to ground disturbing activities. **Program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Project-Level

Implementation of the near-term projects has the potential to disturb human remains due to ground disturbing activities. **Project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

CUL-6 Procedure for Inadvertent Discovery of Human Remains. As specified by California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5, if human remains are found on the project site during construction or during archaeological work, the person responsible for the excavation, or their authorized representative, shall immediately notify the San Diego County Medical Examiner's office. Determination of whether the remains are human shall be conducted by a forensic anthropologist on-site and in situ where they were discovered, unless the forensic anthropologist and the Native American representative agree to remove the remains to an off-site location for examination. No further excavation or disturbance of the site or any nearby area reasonably suspected to overlie adjacent remains shall occur until the Medical Examiner's

office has made the necessary findings as to origin and disposition. A temporary construction exclusion zone shall be established surrounding the area of the discovery so that the area would be protected, and consultation and treatment could occur as prescribed by law. In the event that the remains are determined to be of Native American origin, the Most Likely Descendant, as identified by the Native American Heritage Commission, shall be contacted in order to determine proper treatment and disposition of the remains in accordance with California PRC Section 5097.98. The Native American remains shall be kept in situ, or in a secure location in close proximity to where they were found, and the analysis of the remains shall only occur on-site in the presence of a Native American monitor.

Project-Level

Mitigation measure CUL-6 would apply to the construction of both of the near-term projects.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measure CUL-6 would reduce program-level impacts to human remains to a level that is **less than significant**.

Project-Level

Implementation of mitigation measure CUL-6 would reduce project-level impacts to human remains to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.4.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic area for the analysis of cumulative impacts related to cultural resources is the San Diego County region as cumulative projects in the County have the potential to result in cumulative losses of historical and/or archaeological resources contributing to the historic context of the County.

3.4.5.1 Historic Resources

Cumulative projects could involve the physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of eligible historical resources or their immediate surroundings. These projects would be subject to applicable federal, state, and local regulations; however, even with regulatory compliance, individual historical resources still could be affected or degraded as a result of new development or redevelopment associated with cumulative projects. Therefore, a significant cumulative impact could occur related to the loss of historic resources in the San Diego region. For projects under the CMP, although mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4 would be applied, impacts would remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation for future projects that do not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Therefore, the project's contribution to the significant cumulative historic resources impact **would be cumulatively considerable**.

3.4.5.2 Archaeological Resources

Cumulative projects could involve ground disturbing activities which have the potential to disturb archaeological resources. These projects would be subject to applicable federal, state, and local

regulations; however, even with regulatory compliance, the loss of archaeological resources on a regional level may not be adequately mitigated through compliance with these regulations. Therefore, a significant cumulative impact associated with archaeological resources would occur. However, this is not the case for future campus projects, as the majority of these projects would be constructed in areas of low archaeological resource sensitivity and implementation of mitigation measure CUL-5 would reduce impacts to archaeological resources in areas of moderate archaeological resource sensitivity to a less than significant level. Therefore, the project's contribution to the significant cumulative archaeological resources impact **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.4.5.3 Human Remains

As discussed in Section 3.4.4.3, human burials have occurred outside of formal cemeteries within San Diego County. Therefore, the potential exists for unknown burials to be present throughout the County where cumulative projects could require excavation at depths that could potentially expose or damage human remains. However, these projects would be required to comply with California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and PRC Section 5097.98, which outline applicable protocols for the accidental discovery of human remains during construction activities, similar to the procedure outlined for the future CMP projects in mitigation measure CUL-6. With the implementation of similar mitigation measures and adherence to state regulations, cumulative impacts to human remains would be **less than significant**.

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3.5 Energy

This section addresses the potential energy impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to energy are also addressed.

3.5.1 Environmental Setting

3.5.1.1 Existing Energy Consumption and Generation

Units of Measure

The units of energy used in this section are the British thermal units (BTU), kilowatt hour (kWh), therms, and gallons. A BTU is the quantity of heat required to raise the temperature of one pound of water one degree Fahrenheit (°F) at sea level. A kWh is a unit of electrical energy, and one kWh is equivalent to approximately 3,413 BTU, taking into account initial conversion losses (i.e., from one type of energy, such as chemical, to another type of energy, such as mechanical) and transmission losses. Natural gas consumption is described typically in terms of cubic feet or therms; one cubic foot of natural gas is equivalent to approximately 1,050 BTU, and one therm represents 100,000 BTU. One gallon of gasoline/diesel is equivalent to approximately 125,000/139,000 BTU, respectively, taking into account energy consumed in the refining process.

Electricity

State and Regional

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), California used approximately 245,717,145 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity in 2024 (EIA 2025). Electricity usage in California for differing land uses varies substantially by the type of uses in a building, type of construction materials used in a building, and the efficiency of all electricity-consuming devices within a building.

San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) provides electric service to 3.7 million customers across a 4,100-square-mile service area that includes San Diego County (County) and southern Orange County (SDG&E 2025a). SDG&E provides electricity to the campus and would continue to do so for the proposed project. According to SDG&E, its customers consumed approximately 4.4 billion kWh of electricity in 2025 (SDG&E 2025b).

SDG&E receives electric power from a variety of sources. According to the California Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC's) 2024 California Renewables Portfolio Standard Annual Report, 48 percent of SDG&E's power came from eligible renewable energy sources in 2023, including biomass/waste, geothermal, small hydroelectric, solar, and wind sources (CPUC 2024). Baseline electricity consumption is forecasted to grow at a rate of approximately 1.7 percent annually through 2040 in California (California Energy Commission [CEC] 2024a).

Mesa College

Mesa College currently receives electricity from SDG&E, in addition to a one-megawatt (MW) hydrogen fuel cell system located on the Mesa College campus and solar photovoltaic (PV) panels rated approximately one-MW (District 2023). Electricity on the Mesa College campus is utilized for interior and

exterior lighting, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, computer and office equipment, refrigeration and cooking equipment in dining facilities, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and additional building operations such as security systems and elevators. According to energy bills for the period of March 2024 to February 2025, the yearly electricity consumption on the campus was approximately 1.2 million kWh.

Natural Gas

State and Regional

According to the EIA, California used approximately 1,938,982 million cubic feet of natural gas in 2024 (EIA 2026). CPUC regulates natural gas utility service for approximately 10.8 million customers who receive natural gas from Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E), Southern California Gas (SoCalGas), SDG&E, Southwest Gas, and several smaller natural gas utilities or independent storage operators (CPUC 2026a). SDG&E provides natural gas service to the counties of San Diego and Orange, including the Mesa College campus. SDG&E is a wholesale customer of SoCalGas and currently receives all of its natural gas from the SoCalGas system (CPUC 2026b).

The majority of natural gas used in California is sourced from out-of-state natural gas basins. The state does not receive liquefied natural gas supplies. Biogas, including gas from wastewater treatment plants and dairy farms, has recently begun to be used, and the state has been encouraging its development and expansion. Natural gas from out-of-state production basins is delivered to California via the interstate natural gas pipeline system. This gas is then delivered from SoCalGas and PG&E via the statewide network to local transmission and distribution pipelines, or local storage fields (CPUC 2026b).

Statewide natural gas demand is expected to decrease at an annual average rate of 1.1 percent through 2035. The decline in throughput demand is due to modest economic growth, CPUC-mandated energy efficiency standards and programs, and SB 350 goals to decrease the use of non-renewable energy sources such as natural gas. Other factors that contribute to the downward trend are tighter standards created by revised Title 24 codes and standards, renewable electricity goals, a decline in core commercial and industrial demand, and conservation savings linked to Advanced Metering Infrastructure (California Gas and Electric Utilities 2022).

Mesa College

Mesa College currently receives natural gas from SDG&E. Natural gas is currently used on campus for the heating of buildings and water, other mechanical processes, and in laboratories. According to energy bills for the period of March 2024 to February 2025, the yearly natural gas consumption on the campus was approximately 81.5 million kilo British Thermal Units (kBTU).

Petroleum

State and Regional

According to the EIA, California used approximately 649 million barrels of petroleum in 2023, with the majority (555 million barrels) used for the transportation sector (EIA 2025b). This total annual consumption equates to a daily use of approximately 1.8 million barrels of petroleum. There are 42 U.S. gallons in a barrel; therefore, California consumes approximately 76 million gallons of petroleum per day and 26 billion gallons of petroleum annually.

Petroleum usage in California includes petroleum products such as motor gasoline, distillate fuel (diesel fuel and fuel oils), liquefied petroleum gases, and jet fuel. In 2024, it was estimated that retail gasoline sales in San Diego County totaled 1.1 billion gallons annually, which was the third highest amount consumed among counties in California behind Los Angeles County (3 billion gallons) and Orange County (1.15 billion gallons; CEC 2024b). The retail sales of diesel fuel in 2024 were estimated to be 113 million gallons in 2024 in San Diego County, which ranked as the sixth largest consumer out of counties in California behind Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Kern, Riverside, and San Joaquin counties (CEC 2024b) Petroleum currently accounts for the majority of California's transportation energy consumption. However, technological advances, market trends, consumer behavior, and government policies could result in significant changes in fuel consumption by type and in total. At the federal and state levels, various policies, rules, and regulations have been enacted to improve vehicle fuel efficiency, promote the development and use of alternative fuels, reduce transportation-source air pollutants and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT).

Mesa College

On the Mesa College campus, petroleum use is associated with gasoline used for on-campus landscaping equipment, the District vehicle fleet, and student, faculty, and staff commuter vehicle trips to and from the campus. The District is currently in the process of purchasing electric landscaping equipment to replace their gasoline powered equipment. In addition, the Mesa College campus currently has EV charging stations located at the PS1 Parking Structure on the first level to promote the use of alternative fuels and decrease petroleum consumption.

3.5.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, and District regulations that pertain to energy is provided below. No regional or local regulations related to energy apply to the project.

This section focuses primarily on policies, regulations, and laws that directly pertain to the regulation of energy resources. Many regulations and programs that target the reduction of pollutant or GHG emissions are expected to achieve co-benefits to energy in the form of reduced demand for energy-related resources and enhanced efficiencies related to energy consumption. For example, programs that regulate fuel efficiency are relevant to both emissions and energy consumption. Refer to Section 3.2.2 and Section 3.7.2 for additional federal and state regulations related to energy.

3.5.2.1 Federal

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), the U.S. Department of Energy, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) are three agencies with significant influence over energy policies and programs. Generally, federal agencies influence and regulate transportation energy consumption through the establishment and enforcement of fuel economy standards for automobiles and light trucks, through funding of energy-related research and development projects, and through funding for transportation infrastructure improvements. Major relevant federal energy-related laws and plans are discussed below.

Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act

First enacted in 1975, the Federal Energy Policy and Conservation Act established fuel economy standards for on-road motor vehicles in the U.S. The National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration,

which is part of USDOT, is responsible for establishing additional vehicle standards and revising the existing standards under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. Current standards require a combined passenger car and light-duty truck average fuel economy of 49 miles per gallon by 2026 (National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration 2022). Heavy-duty vehicles (i.e., vehicles and trucks over 8,500 pounds gross vehicle weight) are not currently subject to fuel economy standards. Fuel economy is determined based on each manufacturer's average fuel economy for their fleet of vehicles available for sale in the U.S. On the basis of information gathered under the program, USDOT is authorized to assess penalties for noncompliance. Over its nearly 40-year history, this regulatory program has resulted in vastly improved fuel economy throughout the U.S. vehicle fleet.

Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 set increased fuel economy standards for motor vehicles as well as a renewable fuel standard, building energy efficiency standards, and appliance and lighting efficiency standards. The lighting efficiency standards required increasing levels of energy efficiency, ultimately requiring light bulbs by 2020 to consume 60 percent less energy and effectively phasing out the incandescent lightbulb.

Under the Energy Independence and Security Act, USEPA is responsible for developing and implementing regulations to ensure that transportation fuel sold in the U.S. contains a minimum volume of renewable fuel. The renewable fuels program was expanded to include diesel fuel in addition to gasoline. The Energy Independence and Security Act also required the USEPA to apply lifecycle GHG performance threshold standards to ensure that each category of renewable fuel emits fewer GHGs than the petroleum fuel it replaces. Additional provisions of the Energy Independence and Security Act address energy savings in government and public institutions, research for alternative energy, additional research in carbon capture, international energy programs, and the creation of "green" jobs.

Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 promoted the development of inter-modal transportation systems to maximize mobility, as well as to address national and local interests in air quality and energy. It contained factors that Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) were required to address in developing transportation plans and programs, including some energy-related factors. To meet the new requirements, MPOs adopted explicit policies defining the social, economic, energy, and environmental values that were to guide transportation decisions in that metropolitan area. The planning process for specific projects would then address these policies. Another requirement was to consider the consistency of transportation planning with federal, state, and local energy goals. Through this requirement, energy consumption was expected to become a decision criterion, along with cost and other values that determine the best transportation solution. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century builds upon the initiatives established in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act legislation and authorizes continued and additional highway, highway safety, transit, and other efficient surface transportation programs.

3.5.2.2 State

Renewable Portfolio Standard

Senate Bill 1078

Senate Bill (SB) 1078 (Sher) (September 2002) established the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) program, which required an annual increase in renewable energy generation by the utilities equivalent to at least one percent of sales, with an aggregate goal of 20 percent by 2017. This goal was subsequently revised as described below.

Senate Bill 1368

SB 1368 (September 2006) required the CEC to develop and adopt regulations for GHG emission performance standards for the long-term procurement of electricity by local, publicly owned utilities. These standards must be consistent with the standards adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

Executive Order S-14-08

Executive Order (EO) S-14-08 (November 2008) focused on the contribution of renewable energy sources to meet the electrical needs of California while reducing the GHG emissions from the electrical sector. This EO required that all retail suppliers of electricity in California serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020. Furthermore, the EO directed state agencies to take appropriate actions to facilitate reaching this target. The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), through collaboration with the CEC and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW; formerly the California Department of Fish and Game), was directed to lead this effort.

Executive Order S-21-09 and Senate Bill X1-2

EO S-21-09 (September 2009) directed the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to adopt a regulation consistent with the goal of EO S-14-08 by July 31, 2010. CARB was further directed to work with the CPUC and CEC to ensure that the regulation builds upon the RPS program and was applicable to investor-owned utilities, publicly owned utilities, direct access providers, and community choice providers. Under this order, CARB was to give the highest priority to those renewable resources that provide the greatest environmental benefits with the least environmental costs or impacts on public health and can be developed the most quickly in support of reliable, efficient, cost-effective electricity system operations. On September 23, 2010, CARB initially approved regulations to implement a Renewable Electricity Standard. However, this regulation was not finalized because of subsequent legislation (SB X1-2, Simitian, statutes of 2011) signed by Governor Brown in April 2011.

SB X1-2 expanded the RPS by establishing a renewable energy target for the total electricity sold to retail customers in California per year of 20 percent by December 31, 2013, and 33 percent by December 31, 2020, and in subsequent years. Under the bill, a renewable electrical generation facility is one that uses biomass, solar thermal, PV, wind, geothermal, fuel cells using renewable fuels, small hydroelectric generation (30 MWs or less), digester gas, municipal solid waste conversion, landfill gas, ocean wave, ocean thermal, or tidal current, and that meets other specified requirements with respect to its location.

SB X1-2 applies to all electricity retailers in the state, including publicly owned utilities, investor-owned utilities, electricity service providers, and community choice aggregators. All of these entities must meet the renewable energy goals previously listed.

Senate Bill 350

SB 350 (October 2015, Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act) further expanded the RPS by establishing a goal of 50 percent of the total electricity sold to retail customers in California per year being from renewable sources by December 31, 2030. In addition, SB 350 included the goal to double the energy efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas final end uses (e.g., heating, cooling, lighting, or class of energy uses on which an energy-efficiency program is focused) of retail customers through energy conservation and efficiency. The bill also requires the CPUC, in consultation with the CEC, to establish efficiency targets for electrical and gas corporations consistent with this goal. Regarding mobile sources, SB 350 establishes California Public Utilities Code Section 740.12, which involves a statewide policy for widespread electrification of the transportation sector, recognizing that such electrification is required for the achievement of the state's 2030 and 2050 GHG emission reduction targets.

Senate Bill 100

SB 100 (2018) increased the renewable energy standards set forth in SB 350, establishing that of the total electricity sold to retail customers in California per year, 44 percent by December 31, 2024, 52 percent by December 31, 2027, and 60 percent by December 31, 2030, be secured from qualifying renewable energy sources. SB 100 states that it is the policy of the state that eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 100 percent of the retail sales of electricity to California by 2045. This bill also requires that the achievement of 100 percent zero-carbon electricity resources does not increase carbon emissions elsewhere in the western grid and that the achievement does not occur through resource shuffling.

Senate Bill 1020

SB 1020 (September 2022) revises the standards from SB 100, requiring the following percentage of retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers to come from eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources:90 percent by December 31, 2035; 95 percent by December 31, 2040; and 100 percent by December 31, 2045.

California Energy Code

California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24, Part 6 regulations, California's Energy Efficiency Standards for Residential and Non-residential Buildings, were first established in 1978 in response to a legislative mandate to reduce California's energy consumption. Energy-efficient buildings require less electricity, natural gas, and other fuels. Electricity production from fossil fuels and on-site fuel combustion (typically for space or water heating) results in GHG emissions. The Title 24 standards are updated approximately every three years to allow consideration and possible incorporation of new energy efficiency technologies and methods. The Building Energy Efficiency Standards focus on several key areas to improve the energy efficiency of newly constructed buildings and additions and alterations to existing buildings. These include standards for on-site solar PV (solar panels) and battery storage systems, electric-ready requirements, indoor air quality requirements, and requirements for EV charging (CEC 2025).

The standards are divided into three basic sets. First, there is a basic set of mandatory requirements that apply to all buildings. Second, there is a set of performance standards—the energy budgets—that vary by climate zone (of which there are 16 in California) and building type; thus, the standards are tailored to local conditions. Finally, the third set constitutes an alternative to the performance standards, which is a set of prescriptive packages that are basically a recipe or a checklist compliance approach.

California Green Building Standards Code

The California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen; CCR Title 24, Part 11) is a code with mandatory requirements for all non-residential buildings (including industrial buildings) and residential buildings for which no other state agency has the authority to adopt green building standards. CALGreen also contains voluntary measures (i.e., Tier 1, Tier 2) that exceed minimum regulatory requirements. As is the case for the California Energy Code, CALGreen is updated every three years.

The development of CALGreen is intended to (1) cause a reduction in GHG emissions from buildings; (2) promote environmentally responsible, cost-effective, healthier places to live and work; (3) reduce energy and water consumption; and (4) respond to the directives by the Governor. In short, the code is established to reduce construction waste; make buildings more efficient in the use of materials and energy; and reduce environmental impact during and after construction.

CALGreen contains requirements for storm water control during construction, construction waste reduction, indoor water use reduction, material selection, natural resource conservation, site irrigation conservation, and more. The code provides for design options allowing the designer to determine how best to achieve compliance for a given site or building condition. The code also requires building commissioning, which is a process for the verification that all building systems, like heating and cooling equipment and lighting systems, are functioning at their maximum efficiency.

Assembly Bill 1109

Enacted in 2007, Assembly Bill (AB) 1109 required the CEC to adopt minimum energy efficiency standards for general purpose lighting in order to reduce electricity consumption by 50 percent for indoor residential lighting and 25 percent for indoor commercial lighting.

CEQA Guidelines Appendix F

CEQA Guidelines Appendix F, *Energy Conservation*, provides guidance for Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs) regarding potential energy impacts of proposed projects, with particular emphasis on avoiding or reducing the inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary consumption of energy. In addition, though not described as thresholds for determining the significance of impacts, CEQA Guidelines Appendix F seeks inclusion of information in an EIR addressing the following topics:

- The project's energy requirements and its energy-use efficiencies by amount and fuel type for each stage of the project, including construction, operation, maintenance, and/or removal. If appropriate, the energy intensiveness of materials may be discussed.

- The effects of the project on local and regional energy supplies and on requirements for additional capacity.

- The effects of the project on peak and base period demands for electricity and other forms of energy.
- The degree to which the project complies with existing energy standards.
- The effects of the project on energy resources.
- The project's projected transportation energy use requirements and its overall use of efficient transportation alternatives.

3.5.2.3 District

Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Sustainability & Climate Strategy

Section 1.3, *Sustainability & Climate Strategy*, of the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes the Climate Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, Green Policies, and SDCCD Sustainability Levels.

Sustainability Plan

The District's sustainability framework includes goals in carbon reduction, energy efficiency, water conservation, climate resilience, materials management, indoor and outdoor environmental quality, health and wellness, and community engagement. The Sustainability Plan outlines tangible actions that align with long-term sustainability goals. The district also emphasizes education and outreach, community awareness events, and campus-wide sustainability initiatives. The Sustainability Plan incorporates the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's comprehensive Climate Action and Sustainability Framework, which includes goals in the following areas: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction; Green Buildings; Energy Efficiency; Water Conservation; Waste Reduction; Sustainable Purchasing and Procurement; Transportation; and Food Systems. Goals related to energy include the following:

Green Buildings

- 2025 Benchmark: Establish energy usage intensity (EUI) scores for each building.
- 2030 Goal: Reduce natural gas usage in buildings by 30%.
- 2035 Goal: Achieve a 75% reduction in natural gas usage.

Energy Efficiency

- 2025 Benchmark: Establish EUI scores.
- 2030 Goal: Decrease EUI by 25%.
- 2035 Goal: Decrease EUI by 40%.

Development of the District's Sustainability Plan also included workshops in which feedback provided by students, faculty, and staff was used to identify key themes to guide the development of the goals for the Sustainability Plan. These goals, which include an associated Key Performance Indicator (KPI) have been incorporated into the District's Green Growth program and shall be considered on future facility improvement projects. The following are related to energy.

Energy Goal 1: Maximize the amount of on-site renewable energy generation. **KPI:** Solar Panels installed on every new building.

Energy Goal 2: Carbon Reduction. **KPI:** Build all electric facilities. No natural gas. **KPI:** Utilize all electric vehicles for SDCCD facilities use.

Energy Goal 3: Decrease Energy Consumption. **KPI:** Meter each building. **KPI:** Utilize cool roofs. **KPI:** Utilize natural daylight. i.e., skylights.

SDCCD Sustainability Levels

The District's Sustainability Levels are designed to recognize, measure, and promote sustainable practices across District campuses and facilities. They provide a tiered rating system that encourages environmentally responsible design, construction, and operations. All District capital projects, including new construction, major renovations, and modernization, are required to incorporate the principles outlined in the District Sustainability Levels and meet applicable local, state, and District-adopted sustainability policies. District-adopted sustainability standards include the following:

1. Each campus shall facilitate and maintain an ongoing waste recycling program that establishes where facilities on campus will handle recycled materials including paper, cardboard, glass, plastics, and metal.
2. Renewable woods shall be specified and detailed.
3. The designer shall specify the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Plus Program. All carpet cushion installed in the building shall have low emitting materials and backing.
4. The District's Facilities Services have adopted a program of Green cleaning materials and techniques.

The District's Sustainability Levels include categories with specific requirements that each have an assigned point value. The categories include project design, climate resilience, energy and carbon performance, water conservation and management, materials and waste, indoor environmental quality and wellness, community engagement and learning, and innovation. A scorecard is filled out based on the requirements the project achieves, which determines the sustainability level for the project from the following:

- Baseline/ Sagebrush (Baseline Sustainability) – Meets the District's minimum sustainability standards, with basic energy and water conservation measures.
- Certified/ Coast Live Oak (Sustainable Performance) – Demonstrates significant sustainable strategies.
- Silver/ Torrey Pine (High-Performance Green Building) – Meets advanced sustainable quality benchmarks.
- Gold/ Redwood (Leadership in Sustainability) – Implements innovative sustainability strategies.
- Platinum/ Sequoia (Exemplar of Sustainability) – Sets model for sustainable education facilities.

All final programming documents must contain a section related to sustainability. The conceptual design for new building projects must have sustainable features that achieve the Certified/Coastal Live Oak level at a minimum. Conceptual design schemes for major renovation projects should have sustainable features and may be required to achieve a Certified/Coastal Live Oak level; however, this is determined on a case-by-case basis based on the feasibility of incorporating such features into a renovation project.

General Specifications

Section 2.2 of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes general specifications and product and material data for the construction of District projects. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs. The following specifications are related to energy.

Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning

This section includes the following energy efficiency standards for HVAC systems installed on District properties. Specific requirements are included in the areas of system components for energy efficiency, fan and motor efficiency, optimized airflow and exhaust placement, thermostat placement considerations, control system integration, and economizer requirements.

Site Furnishings

This section directs projects implemented on District properties to provide solar-powered aluminum umbrellas equipped with integrated PV panels capable of charging mobile devices in outdoor environments. The system must support at least three dual USB charging ports for use with phones, tablets, and laptops. Umbrellas should be compatible with standard outdoor table configurations (e.g., carousel-style) and be available in a range of durable, weather-resistant finishes and color options.

Electric Power Generation

This section states that the District is committed to implementing clean, resilient, and code compliant energy systems in support of California's energy goals, District sustainability objectives, and long term operational efficiency. This section additionally establishes the minimum requirements for the design, installation, and integration of PV systems and battery energy storage systems on new construction and major modernization projects within the District. The District has committed to providing 1 MW of PV generation capacity at Mesa College, City College, and Miramar College.

District Board Policies and Administrative Procedures

Board Policy 6970: Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards. The Board of Trustees has established a Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards to provide District students, faculty and staff with working and learning environments that are healthy, thermally, visually, and acoustically comfortable; energy efficient; material efficient; water efficient; easy to maintain and operate; safe and secure and sited in an environmentally responsible manner. In accordance with this Board Policy, the District selects architects, engineers and other professionals who have demonstrated expertise in sustainable design and are Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) accredited as deemed appropriate.

Administrative Procedure 6970: Green Buildings. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance for implementing District policies and standards for the design and construction of green buildings and renovations. Efficient energy use and efficiently designed buildings are central to resource sustainability efforts of the District, City, and state. Energy conservation in building design 1) reduces the operating costs of the District, 2) reduces the carbon footprint of the District, and 3) provides environmental education. This Administrative Procedure goes on to outline criteria for new buildings including, but not limited to, outperforming Title 24 energy efficiency standards by at least 20 percent, striving to achieve a LEED for New Construction (LEED-NC) gold rating, and requiring that at least 5 percent of a project's total energy is generated on site from renewable sources.

3.5.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential energy impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant energy impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation; or

2. Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

3.5.4 Impact Analysis

3.5.4.1 Energy Consumption

Threshold 1: Would the project result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Electricity

During construction of projects implemented under the CMP, temporary electric power would be provided by SDG&E for as-necessary lighting and electronic equipment (including use for computers, HVAC within construction trailers), and electrically powered hand tools. The electricity used for construction activities would be temporary and minimal. It also would be used on an as-needed basis and, therefore, would not be wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary.

Once projects implemented under the CMP become operational, electricity would be used in a similar manner compared to existing conditions, which includes electricity for interior and exterior lighting, HVAC systems, computer and office equipment, refrigeration and cooking equipment in dining halls, EV charging stations, and additional building operations such as security systems and elevators. As discussed in Section 3.5.1.1, the Mesa College campus used approximately 1.2 million kWh of electricity in the one-year period between March 2024 and February 2025. Based on the existing on-campus building area, this yearly electricity usage equates to an electricity consumption rate of approximately 0.9 kWh per gross square foot (GSF) of building area. To estimate the electricity that would be required for full buildout of the CMP, this consumption rate was applied to the total building area that would comprise the Mesa College campus in 2045 with implementation of the CMP. In accordance with District

policies, future buildings constructed as part of the CMP would typically be all-electric (would not use natural gas unless required by specific, limited functions). Therefore, the natural gas use for the newly proposed buildings was converted to the equivalent energy in electricity and added to the electricity use that was calculated using the District energy consumption rates. These calculations estimate that the electricity consumed during full buildout of the CMP would be approximately 9.6 million kWh per year.

The projects implemented under the CMP would be required to comply with all federal, state, and District policies related to energy conservation. The District currently implements green building standards in campus facilities in accordance with Board Policy 6970 (Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards) and Administrative Procedure 6970 (Green Buildings) as outlined in Section 3.5.2.3. Board Policy 6970 requires the District to select architects, engineers and other professionals who have demonstrated expertise in sustainable design and are accredited. Administrative Procedure 6970 provides guidance for implementing District policies and standards for the design and construction of green buildings and renovations and outlines criteria for new buildings including, but not limited to, outperforming Title 24 energy efficiency standards by at least 20 percent, striving to achieve a LEED-NC gold rating, and requiring that at least five percent of a project's total energy is generated on site from renewable sources. The District has additionally developed the Sustainability Levels, which provide a tiered rating system that encourages environmentally responsible design, construction, and operations. This system applies to new construction, major renovations, and modernization projects. The Sustainability Levels framework identifies incentives for energy and carbon performance standards, including energy efficiency greater than Title 24 requirements, integration of on-site renewable energy sources and battery storage.

While implementation of the CMP would increase the overall demand for electricity at Mesa College, the replacement or renovation of older, less efficient buildings with new construction to current, more stringent energy codes would make electricity use more efficient. With adherence to state building codes that regulate energy efficiency and implementation of the District policies related to energy conservation outlined above, implementation of the CMP would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of electricity during project construction or operation.

Natural Gas

Natural gas is not anticipated to be required during construction of projects under the CMP. Fuels used for construction would primarily consist of diesel and gasoline, which are discussed below. Any minor amount of natural gas that may be consumed as a result of project construction activities would be temporary and negligible and would not occur in a wasteful manner.

The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes policies related to building electrification, including a goal to achieve a 75 percent reduction in natural gas usage by 2035 and to build new facilities with no natural gas connections. The District standard is for all new buildings to be all-electric and not use natural gas for processes that can rely instead on electricity, such as building or water heating. Natural gas would only be used in limited, function-specific applications where electric alternatives are not feasible, subject to approval by the District Architect. As discussed in Section 3.5.1.1, the Mesa College campus used approximately 81.5 million kBTU of natural gas in the one-year period from March 2024 to February 2025. Based on the existing on-campus building area, this yearly natural gas usage equates to a natural gas consumption rate of approximately 61.7 kBTU per GSF of building area.

Assuming demolition of existing buildings planned under the CMP removes natural gas at this rate, it was estimated that the natural gas consumed during full buildout of the CMP would be approximately 64 million kBTU per year. This would represent a decrease of approximately 17.5 million kBTU of natural gas compared to existing conditions. Further, the older buildings on campus are generally those planned for demolition; therefore, it is likely that natural gas use would actually be reduced beyond this level as these buildings are typically more reliant on natural gas under existing conditions. As building and water heating equipment requires replacement, these sources of natural gas consumption would also be replaced with electric equivalents, thereby reducing natural gas consumption beyond the levels noted with demolition of existing buildings.

The addition of a linear generator system is anticipated at Mesa College, which is a device that coverts linear mechanical motion into electrical energy and can run on natural gas, biogas, propane, and hydrogen. The core mechanism involves the relative motion between a magnetic field and a conductor (usually a coil) to induce an electrical current. The installation of this linear generator system would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary use of energy. Rather, this system would utilize a minimal amount of natural gas, and would address electrical utility load reduction on campus through a highly efficient system to produce electricity on campus.

Overall, the CMP is anticipated to reduce natural gas over the buildout period through building replacements with all-electric construction and replacement of gas-powered equipment. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of natural gas during project construction or operation.

Petroleum

Petroleum-based fuels, including gasoline and diesel, would be the primary source of energy during construction. Fuel consumed by construction equipment would be the primary source of energy consumption during construction, while the transportation of construction materials and construction workers would also use fuel resources. Heavy-duty construction equipment associated with construction activities, as well as haul trucks involved in moving dirt around the project site, are anticipated to rely on diesel fuel. Construction workers would travel to and from the project site throughout the duration of construction projects. It is assumed that construction workers would travel to and from the project site mainly in gasoline-powered vehicles.

The projects implemented under the CMP would be required to comply with CARB's Airborne Toxics Control Measure, which restricts heavy-duty diesel vehicle idling time to no more than five minutes. Furthermore, the construction practices used on campus would be typical and would not require specialized construction equipment or otherwise present unusual circumstances in which substantial amounts of fuel would be required. In addition, given the high cost of fuel, contractors and the District have a strong financial incentive to avoid wasteful, inefficient, and unnecessary consumption of these resources during construction. Therefore, petroleum use during construction of the projects under the CMP would be temporary and would not be wasteful or inefficient.

The majority of fuel consumption during operation of the proposed projects under the CMP would be used by vehicles traveling to and from the Mesa College campus for student, faculty, and staff commutes. Although the amount of vehicle trips is expected to increase during buildout of the CMP as a result of regional growth and could result in an increase in petroleum use, over the lifetime of the proposed CMP projects, the fuel efficiency of the vehicles used by students, faculty, and staff is

expected to increase. This is largely due to increasing statewide fuel economy standards and an anticipated shift in the statewide vehicle fleet to increased numbers of EVs. For example, CARB has adopted an approach to passenger vehicles by combining the control of smog-causing pollutants and GHG emissions into a single, coordinated package of standards. The approach also includes efforts to support and accelerate the number of plug-in hybrids and zero-emissions vehicles in California. Buildout of the CMP would support the implementation of these efforts with the installation of EV charging infrastructure in new parking facilities. Overall, these practices are consistent with state transportation energy and emissions policies, including CARB vehicle standards and statewide electrification goals.

In addition, petroleum would be utilized to power the District fleet. However, the District is currently purchasing zero-emission vehicles for maintenance and facilities staff as the fleet requires replacement, which would reduce the amount of petroleum consumed by District vehicles over time compared to existing conditions. While the CMP would result in the consumption of petroleum-based fuels during operations, implementation of the CMP would not result in the wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of petroleum-based energy resources.

Project-Level

Construction of the near-term projects would primarily require the use of electricity and petroleum as described in the program-level analysis above. However, the near-term projects would use these resources temporarily and as discussed further for the program-level above, their use would not occur in a wasteful or inefficient manner.

Once the near-term projects become operational, they would be required to comply with the District policies related to energy efficiency and conservation outlined in the program-level analysis above. Specifically, the Performing Arts and Administration and Parking Structure project would construct EV charging stations within the parking structure. In addition, the buildings constructed by the near-term projects would be required to include sustainable features outlined in the District's Sustainability Levels that achieve the Certified/Coastal Live Oak level at a minimum (see Section 3.5.2.3 for additional information regarding this program). Further, construction of the near-term projects would be required to comply with Administrative Procedure 6970, which is discussed in Section 3.5.4.2 below. Based on the land uses proposed for the Athletics Complex and Performing Arts and Administration and Parking Structure projects, neither of the near-term projects are anticipated to be constructed with natural gas connections and would be all-electric. However, as discussed in the program-level analysis above, natural gas may be used in select instances where electricity would not serve the intended use and with prior approval by the District Architect. Should certain components of the near-term projects require the use of natural gas, the amount would be minimal and necessary as it would be limited to the functions that cannot operate with electricity use alone. The near-term projects would not result in wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of natural gas.

As discussed at the program-level above, the majority of fuel consumption during operation of the CMP would be the result of vehicles traveling to and from the Mesa College campus for student, faculty, and staff commutes. However, the near-term projects would not cause a direct increase in the campus' population and, therefore, would not be directly associated with new vehicle trips involving the use of gasoline. With implementation of District policies related to energy efficiency and conservation, implementation of the near-term projects would not result in a wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.5.4.2 Energy Plans

Threshold 2: Would the project conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The projects proposed under the CMP would comply with applicable energy standards and regulations during construction and would be built and operated in accordance with applicable building regulations in effect at the time of construction. These regulations would include CALGreen, which contains requirements for construction waste reduction, indoor water use reduction, material selection, natural resource conservation, and site irrigation conservation, and the California Energy Code, which includes standards for on-site PV panels and battery storage systems, electric-ready requirements, indoor air quality requirements, and requirements for EV charging.

The District has outlined various policies which implement the renewable energy and energy efficiency guidance within the Community Colleges Board of Governors' Climate Action and Sustainability Framework. At the District level, projects implemented under the CMP involving new construction, major renovations, and modernization, are required to incorporate the principles outlined in the District Sustainability Levels. Within the categories of project design, climate resilience, energy and carbon performance, water conservation and management, materials and waste, indoor environmental quality and wellness, community engagement and learning, and innovation, the Sustainability Levels framework outlines specific implementation methods which would be applied to these projects as feasible. Each project implemented under the CMP would be required to achieve a Certified/Coastal Live Oak level, which demonstrates significant sustainable strategies. See Section 3.5.2.3 for additional information. Specific implementation methods which would relate to energy include all electric construction, energy modeling analysis to inform selection of project energy systems, demonstrating energy savings up to 20 percent greater than Title 24 baseline standards, and generating at least 20 percent of the project's annual energy demand through on-site renewable energy sources such as PV systems or wind turbines.

In addition, projects implemented under the CMP would be required to comply with Administrative Procedure 6970 (Green Buildings), which establishes criteria for new buildings including, but not limited to, outperforming Title 24 energy efficiency standards by at least 20 percent, striving to achieve a LEED-NC gold rating, and requiring that at least five percent of a project's total energy is generated on site from renewable sources. In addition, projects implemented under the CMP which involve parking facilities would install EV charging stations, and new buildings would be all-electric to the extent feasible.

In addition, the Mesa College campus currently hosts a one-MW hydrogen fuel cell system and PV panels rated approximately one-MW that generate renewable energy. The District has previously used

programs intended to increase renewable energy generation, such as power purchase agreements for solar panels on other campuses. While no specific renewable energy facilities are part of the CMP, the District would continue to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating such technology on campus as it is available and economically feasible. As such, implementation of the CMP would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be required to comply with the state and District requirements for energy efficiency outlined in the program-level analysis above. As discussed under Section 3.5.4.1, the Performing Arts and Administration and Parking Structure project would construct EV charging stations within the parking structure component. Further, each of the buildings constructed by the near-term projects would be required to comply with CALGreen and California Energy Code requirements, include sustainable features outlined in the District's Sustainability Levels, and achieve the goals and requirements outlined in Administrative Procedure 6970 (Green Buildings). In addition, the near-term projects are anticipated to be all-electric. However, should the near-term projects require the use of natural gas for specific functions, the amount would be minimal and would not result in conflicts with a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. Therefore, implementation of the near-term projects would not conflict or obstruct the implementation of state energy efficiency plans, the Community Colleges Board of Governors' Climate Action and Sustainability Framework, or the District guidance related to energy efficiency.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.5.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope for projects that may have a potential cumulative impact related to energy are projects occurring within the areas served by the project's energy service provider (SDG&E).

3.5.5.1 Energy Consumption

Potential cumulative impacts related to energy consumption could result if the proposed CMP, in combination with past, present, and future projects, would result in the wasteful or inefficient use of energy. This could result from development that would not incorporate sufficient building energy efficiency features, not achieve building energy efficiency standards, or would result in the wasteful or unnecessary use of energy during construction or operations. Projects that would mostly include construction, such as transportation infrastructure, could also contribute to a cumulative impact; however, the impact of these projects would be limited because they would typically not involve ongoing, substantial energy use. Similar to the proposed CMP projects, cumulative development projects would be subject to applicable state energy efficiency regulations, such as CALGreen and California Energy Code energy efficiency standards. Future development would be required to meet increasingly stringent building standards as they are set forth by the state. As discussed above, the implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in the wasteful or inefficient use of energy. Therefore, the cumulative impact related to the wasteful or inefficient use of

energy from the proposed CMP, in combination with cumulative projects, would be **less than significant**.

3.5.5.2 Energy Plans

Cumulative development projects would be required to comply with increasingly stringent building standards set forth by the state, such as CALGreen and the California Energy Code, in addition to local energy efficiency requirements such as the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), where applicable. These regulations also direct the provision of renewable energy on new construction, typically in the form of solar PV systems. Similarly, the project would be required to comply with District policies and state requirements for increasing energy efficiency. Therefore, the cumulative impact from the proposed CMP, in combination with cumulative projects, would be **less than significant**.

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3.6 Geology and Soils

This section addresses the potential geology and soils impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to geology and soils are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analysis in the Geology and Soils Technical Study prepared by Ninyo & Moore (2026) and the Paleontological Resources Technical Report prepared by the San Diego Natural History Museum (SDNHM) Department of PaleoServices (2026) provided as Appendix F and Appendix G, respectively, to the PEIR.

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

3.6.1.1 Geologic Setting

The project site is situated in the San Diego County (County) coastal section of the Peninsular Ranges Geomorphic Province (Province). This Province encompasses an area that extends approximately 900 miles from the Transverse Ranges and the Los Angeles Basin on the north to the southern tip of Baja California on the south. The Province varies in width from approximately 30 to 100 miles. In general, the Province consists of rugged mountains underlain by Jurassic metavolcanic and metasedimentary rocks, and Cretaceous igneous rocks of the southern California batholith. In the coastal plain portion of the Province where the project site is located, Quaternary-age sedimentary deposits overlie Tertiary- and Cretaceous-age sedimentary units.

The Province is traversed by a group of sub-parallel faults and fault zones trending roughly northwest. Several of these faults are considered active faults, including the Elsinore, San Jacinto, and San Andreas fault systems located northeast of the project site. The Rose Canyon, Coronado Bank, San Diego Trough, and San Clemente faults are also active faults located west of the project site. The Rose Canyon fault zone, the nearest active fault system to the project site, has been mapped approximately 2.4 miles west of the project site. Major tectonic activity associated with these regional fault systems primarily consists of right-lateral, strike-slip movement. See Section 3.6.1.2 below for additional discussion of faulting and seismicity in the project area.

Soils and Fill Materials

Seven soil units are mapped on the project site, including Carlsbad-Urban Land Complex (2 to 9 percent slopes), Chesterton Fine Sandy Loam (2 to 5 percent slopes), Chesterton – Urban Land Complex (2 to 9 percent slopes), Olivenhain Cobbly Loam (30 to 50 percent slopes), Olivenhain – Urban Land Complex (9 to 30 percent slopes), Terrace Escarpments, and Gaviota Fine Sandy Loam (30 to 50 percent slopes). These soil units are generally considered to have very high runoff and negligible erosion potential.

Based on a review of geologic maps, reviews of on-site and nearby geotechnical reports, and a site survey, soils underlying the project site are generally anticipated to consist of fill materials, alluvium, very old paralic deposits, and materials of the Friars Formation and Stadium Conglomerate, which are each discussed further below.

Artificial Fill

Fill soils are anticipated to underlie portions of the project site due to previous land use, building construction, and burial of underground utility lines. The fill was placed in several pre-existing valleys

along the perimeter of the project site to create level pads as well as the football and baseball fields. Fill has been encountered at depths of up to approximately 26 feet at the project site. As observed at the project site and encountered in borings previously drilled on the site, the fill soils are generally anticipated to include loose to very dense, silty sand and clayey sand with gravel and cobbles. Scattered construction debris has also been encountered in the fill material.

Alluvium

Quaternary-age alluvium is mapped in the low-lying areas on the western side of the project site. The alluvium is anticipated to consist of poorly consolidated sand, silt, and clay with gravel and cobbles.

Very Old Paralic Deposits

Middle to early Pleistocene-age very old paralic deposits, also referred to as the Lindavista Formation, are mapped across much of the project site. Very old paralic deposits generally consist of poorly sorted, moderately permeable, reddish-brown, interfingered strandline, beach, estuarine, and colluvial deposits composed of siltstone, sandstone, and conglomerate. Very old paralic deposits are described as weakly to moderately cemented, silty sandstone, clayey sandstone, and sandy gravel and cobble conglomerate. The very old paralic deposits irregularly overlie the Stadium Conglomerate and Friars Formation in the project site.

Stadium Conglomerate

Middle Eocene-age materials of the Stadium Conglomerate are mapped to underlie the very old paralic deposits in the southernmost portion of the project site. The Stadium Conglomerate consists of a massive cobble conglomerate with a dark-yellowish-brown, coarse-grained sandstone matrix. The Stadium Conglomerate consistently overlies the Friars Formation.

Friars Formation

The Eocene-age Friars Formation is mapped as underlying the very old paralic deposits and Stadium Conglomerate at the project site. The Friars Formation consists of a medium-grained, massive, poorly indurated non-marine and lagoonal sandstone and claystone with tongues of cobble conglomerate. The Friars Formation is described as weakly to strongly cemented, silty sandstone and sandy siltstone.

Groundwater

Surface water was observed within the drainage channel along the western edge of the project site. Seasonal shallow groundwater is anticipated to be present in and around this channel. Based on review of well monitoring data for a well southeast of the project site, groundwater has been observed at depths ranging from approximately 29 to 34 feet below ground surface. Perched conditions have also been encountered in borings drilled on the project site at depths as shallow as approximately 15 feet below ground surface. Perched conditions and zones of seepage are most likely to occur at the contact between fill material and very old paralic deposits and/or Friars Formation and Stadium Conglomerate. Groundwater levels can fluctuate due to seasonal variations, groundwater withdrawal or injection, and other factors. Groundwater near the project site is expected to generally flow west and south towards Tecolote Canyon.

According to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan), the site is located within the Tecolote Hydrologic Area (HA) within the Peñasquitos Hydrologic Unit (HU). This HA is indicated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) as being excepted from municipal and domestic supply beneficial use. See Section 3.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, for additional information related to beneficial uses of nearby waters.

3.6.1.2 Geologic Hazards

Faulting and Seismicity

The project site is located in a seismically active area, as is the majority of southern California, resulting in the potential for strong ground motion at the project site. The Rose Canyon fault zone, the nearest active fault zone to the project site, consists of predominantly right-lateral strike-slip faults that extend south-southeast through the San Diego region. The project site is not located within a State of California Earthquake Fault Zone (formerly known as an Alquist-Priolo Special Studies Zone). The nearest active fault, the Rose Canyon Fault, is located approximately 2.4 miles west of the project site and is capable of producing a maximum moment magnitude of 6.9.

Per the City of San Diego Safety Study, Geologic Hazards and Faults (City of San Diego [City] 2008), much of the project site is mapped within hazard category 51, which is defined as "level mesas – underlain by terrace deposits and bedrock, nominal risk." However, other areas of the site, generally below the upper mesa, are located within hazard categories 52, 32, 24, 23, and 12. Hazard category 52 is defined as other level areas, gently sloping to steep terrain with favorable geologic structure and low risk. The low-lying, westernmost portions of the project site adjacent to Genesee Avenue are located within hazard category 32, which designates a low potential for liquefaction due to presence of "fluctuating groundwater, minor drainages." Other portions of the project site are located where hazard categories of slide-prone formations occur underlain by the Friars Formation with neutral or favorable geologic structure (hazard category 23) and unfavorable geologic structure (hazard category 24). The area of Friars Formation with unfavorable geologic structure is located in the northwestern portion of the project site. See Figure 3.6-1, *Geologic Hazards*.

Landslides

Landslides have not been mapped on or adjacent to the project site and evidence of landsliding was not observed on aerial photographs or during the site survey. Much of the project site is mapped as having low susceptibility to landslides; however, slopes and lower-lying areas of the project site are mapped as being susceptible to landslides, including an area of Friars Formation with unfavorable geologic structure mapped in the northwestern portion of the project site (see Figure 3.6-1).

Liquefaction and Seismically Induced Settlement

Liquefaction is the phenomenon in which ground shaking of sufficient duration results in the loss of grain-to-grain contact due to rapid rise in pore water pressure, and it eventually causes the soil to behave as a fluid for a short period of time. Factors known to influence liquefaction potential include composition and thickness of soil layers, grain size, relative density, groundwater level, degree of saturation, and both intensity and duration of ground shaking. Liquefaction typically occurs when loosely deposited, saturated granular soils located below the water table with clay contents of less than 15 percent, liquid limit of less than 35 percent, and natural moisture content greater than 90 percent of the liquid limit undergo rapid loss of shear strength due to development of excess pore pressure during

strong earthquake-induced ground shaking. Liquefaction is known to generally occur in saturated or near-saturated cohesionless soils at depths shallower than 50 feet below grade.

Based on the relatively dense nature of underlying very old paralic deposits, Stadium Conglomerate, and Friars Formation at the project site, the risk for liquefaction and seismically induced settlement is considered low. However, as mentioned previously, the low-lying, westernmost portions of the project site are designated by the City of San Diego Safety Study (City 2008) as having a low potential for liquefaction. In this area, the alluvial soils above and below the shallow groundwater table may experience liquefaction and seismically induced settlement.

Soil Expansion

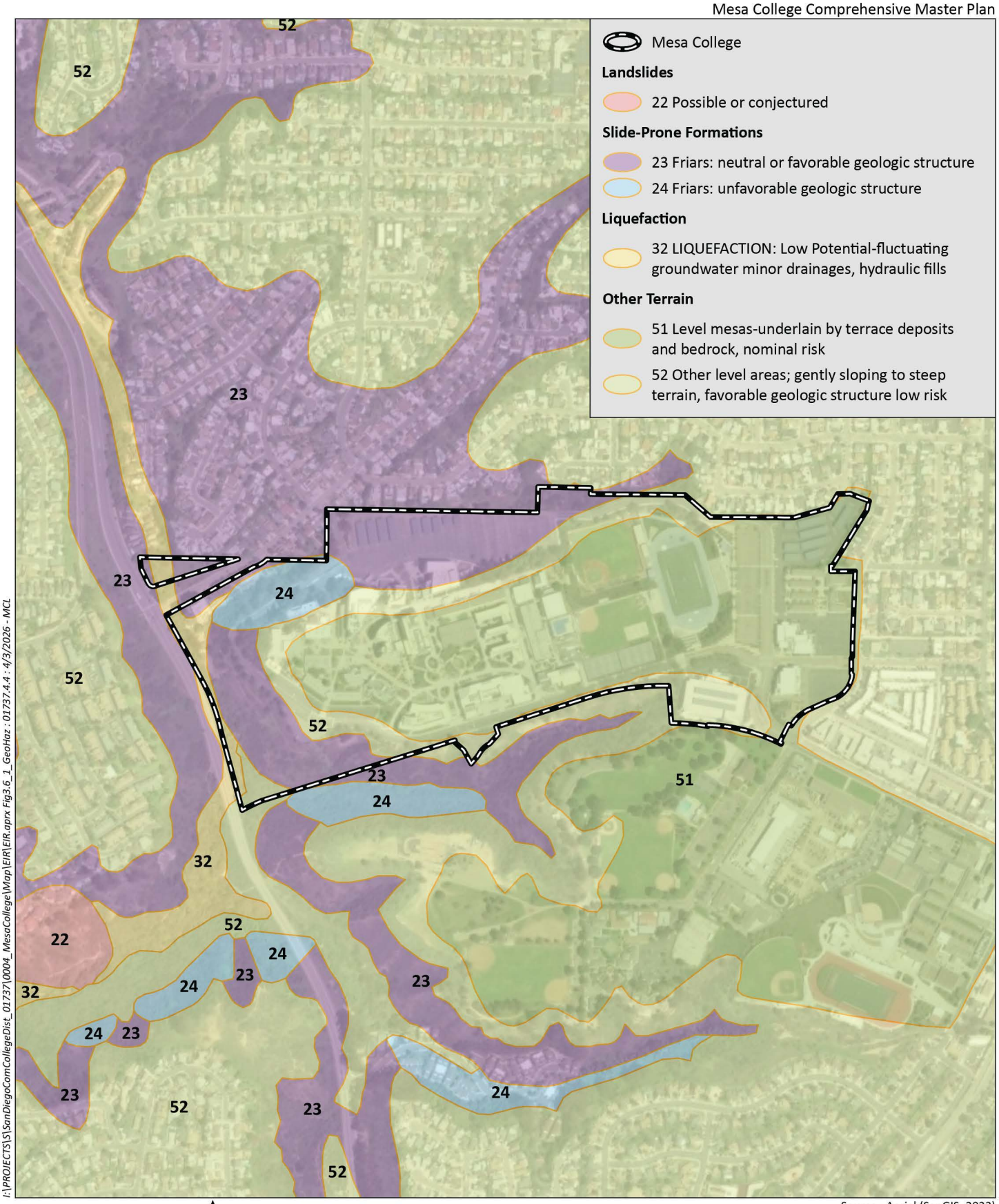
Soil expansion generally results from specific clay minerals that have the capacity to shrink or swell in response to changes in moisture content. Shrinking or swelling of foundation soils can lead to damage to slabs, foundations, and other engineered structures, including tilting and cracking. The expansion potential of a soil is determined through laboratory testing to determine if the expansion index of a soil is very low to very high. The soils and earth materials present within the project site range in their expansion potential and are considered to have a very low to high potential for expansion.

3.6.1.3 Paleontological Resources

Paleontological resources (fossils) are the remains of indications of ancient non-human organisms and, as such, are scarce non-renewable natural resources. Fossil remains such as bones, teeth, shells, and leaves are found in geologic deposits (rock formations) where they were originally buried. As a result, the potential for fossils in an area can be predicted based on known relationships between geologic formations and fossil occurrences. Although typically it is assumed that fossils must be older than approximately 11,700 years, organic remains older than recorded human history and/or older than middle Holocene (about 5,000 radiocarbon years) can also be considered to represent fossils.

The campus is primarily underlain by mesa-capping middle Pleistocene-age (approximately 855,000 years old) very old paralic deposits (equivalent to the Lindavista Formation), as well as the middle Eocene-age (approximately 44 to 42 million years old) Stadium Conglomerate, middle Eocene-age (approximately 46 to 45 million years old) Friars Formation, and middle Eocene-age (approximately 47 to 46 million years old) Scripps Formation, with late Pleistocene- to Holocene-age (less than 129,000 years old) young alluvial flood plain deposits mapped along low-lying drainages in the western portion of the campus. As described above, artificial fill associated with previous construction activities is also anticipated to be present within the project site. Previously placed artificial fill is assigned no paleontological resource sensitivity, Young alluvial flood plain deposits are assigned a low paleontological resource sensitivity, the Lindavista Formation is assigned a moderate paleontological resource sensitivity, and the Stadium Conglomerate, Friars Formation, and Scripps Formation are assigned a high paleontological resource sensitivity.

A search of the SDNHM paleontological collections database identified 20 fossil localities within a one-mile radius of the Mesa College campus, none of which are located within the project site. Of these, one locality is from the Lindavista Formation, one locality is from the Stadium Conglomerate, one locality is from undivided deposits of the Stadium Conglomerate and Mission Valley Formation, two localities are from the Friars Formation, and five localities are from the Scripps Formation.



HELIX Environmental Planning

Geologic Hazards

Figure 3.6-1

3.6.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to geology and soils is provided below.

3.6.2.1 Federal

Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act

The Earthquake Hazards Reduction Act of 1977 (Public Law 95-124) established the National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program, which is coordinated through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), the National Science Foundation, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology. The purpose of this program is to establish measures for earthquake hazards reduction and promote the adoption of earthquake hazards reduction measures by federal, state, and local governments; national standards and model code organizations; architects and engineers; building owners; and others with a role in planning and constructing buildings, structures, and lifelines through (1) grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, and technical assistance; (2) development of standards, guidelines, and voluntary consensus codes for earthquake hazards reduction for buildings, structures, and lifelines; and (3) development and maintenance of a repository of information, including technical data, on seismic risk and hazards reduction. The National Earthquake Hazards Reduction Program is intended to improve the understanding of earthquakes and their effects on communities, buildings, structures, and lifelines through interdisciplinary research that involves engineering, natural sciences, and social, economic, and decisions sciences.

Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000

The Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (Public Law 106-390) provides the legal basis for FEMA mitigation planning requirements for state, local, and tribal governments as a condition of mitigation grant assistance. This act amended the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act by repealing the previous mitigation planning provisions and replacing them with a new set of requirements that emphasizes the need for state, local, and tribal entities to closely coordinate mitigation planning and implementation efforts. The requirement for a state mitigation plan is continued as a condition of disaster assistance, adding incentives for increased coordination and integration of mitigation activities at the state level through the establishment of requirements for two levels of state plans. This act also established a new requirement for local mitigation plans and authorized up to seven percent of Hazard Mitigation Grand Program funds available to a state for the development of state, local, and tribal mitigation plans.

International Building Code

The International Building Code (IBC) is one of the International Codes published by the International Code Council and forms the basis for the California Building Code (CBC), as well as most of the state building codes in the U.S. The IBC assigns buildings risk categories and design requirements based on the intended use of a facility. The IBC has been adopted by the California Legislature to address the specific building conditions and structural requirements for California, as well as provide guidance on foundation design and structural engineering practices for different soil types.

U.S. Geological Survey Landslide Hazards Program

The USGS Landslide Hazard Program provides information on landslide hazards, including information on current landslides, landslide reporting, real time monitoring of landslide areas, mapping of landslides through the National Landslide Hazards Map, local landslide information, landslide education, and research (USGS 2024).

3.6.2.2 State

Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Public Resources Code [PRC] Sections 2621-2630, Division 2 Chapter 7.5) was passed in 1972 to mitigate the hazard of surface faulting to structures intended for human occupancy. The purpose of this act is to prevent the construction of buildings used for human occupancy on the surface trace of active faults. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act only addresses the hazard of surface fault rupture and is not directed toward other earthquake hazards. The act requires the State Geologist to establish regulatory zones, known as "Earthquake Fault Zones," around the surface traces of active faults and to issue appropriate maps. Local agencies must regulate most development projects within these zones. Before a project can be permitted, cities and counties must require a geologic investigation to demonstrate that proposed buildings for human occupancy would not be constructed across active faults. An evaluation and written report of a specific site must be prepared by a licensed geologist. If an active fault is found, a structure for human occupancy cannot be placed over the trace of the fault and must be set back from the fault (typically 50-foot setbacks are required).

Seismic Hazards Mapping Act

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act of 1990 directs the California Department of Conservation (DOC), California Geological Survey (CGS) to identify and map areas prone to liquefaction, earthquake-induced landslides, and amplified ground shaking. The purpose of the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act is to minimize loss of life and property through the identification, evaluation, and mitigation of seismic hazards. Staff geologists gather existing geological, geophysical, and geotechnical data from numerous sources to produce the Seismic Hazard Zone Maps. They integrate and interpret these data regionally to evaluate the severity of seismic hazards and designate Zones of Required Investigation for those areas prone to liquefaction and earthquake-induced landslides. Cities and counties are then required to use the Seismic Hazard Zone Maps in their land use planning and building permit processes. The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act requires that site-specific geotechnical investigations be conducted within the Zones of Required Investigation to identify and evaluate seismic hazards (i.e., liquefaction and earthquake-induced landslides) and formulate mitigation or recommendations to reduce these hazards prior to permitting most developments designed for human occupancy.

Special Publication 117A

The CGS prepared the Guidelines for Evaluating and Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California (Special Publication 117A) in 2008, revising the 1997 edition of this publication. Special Publication 117A constitutes the guidelines for evaluating seismic hazards other than surface fault-rupture, and for recommending mitigation measures as required by PRC Section 2695(a). The objectives of Special Publication 117A are to assist in the evaluation and mitigation of earthquake-related hazards for projects within designated zones of required investigation and to promote uniform and effective

statewide implementation of the evaluation and mitigation elements of the Seismic Hazards Mapping Act.

California Geologic Survey Note 48 Requirements

CGS Note 48 is a checklist used by CGS to evaluate engineering geology and seismology reports prepared for public schools, hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and essential services buildings under the CBC. It outlines the required components of these reports, including assessments of faulting, landslides, liquefaction, and other geologic hazards, and ensures they meet regulatory standards prior to approval by agencies such as the Division of the State Architect (DSA) for schools.

California Building Standards Code

California building standards are published in California Code of Regulations (CCR) Title 24, also known as the California Building Standards Code. The California Building Standards Code, which applies to all applications for building permits, consists of 11 parts that contain administrative regulations for the California Building Standards Commission and for all state agencies that implement or enforce building standards. Local agencies must ensure development complies with the California Building Standards Code guidelines. Cities and counties can also adopt additional building standards that are more stringent than the California Building Standards Code. California Building Standards Code Part 2, the CBC, is based upon the IBC, as described below.

California Building Code

The CBC, Part 2 of the California Building Standards Code, is included in CCR Title 24. The CBC incorporates the IBC, a model building code adopted across the U.S. Through the CBC, the state provides a minimum standard for building design and construction. The CBC contains specific requirements for seismic safety, foundations, retaining walls, and site demolition. The CBC also includes provisions for grading, including drainage and erosion control. The CBC provides minimum standards to protect property and public safety by regulating the design and construction of excavations, foundations, building frames, retaining walls, and other building elements to mitigate the effects of seismic shaking and adverse soil conditions. The CBC has provisions for earthquake safety based on factors including occupancy type, the types of soil and rock on-site, and the strength of ground shaking with a specified probability of occurring at a site.

Chapter 16, Structural Design, of the CBC requires that structural designs be based on geologic information for seismic parameters, soil characteristics, and site geology. Chapter 18, Soils and Foundations, defines the criteria for preparation of a geotechnical report. It also sets requirements for excavations and fills, foundations, and retaining structures with regard to expansive soils; design measures to address liquefaction potential, if warranted; subgrade bearing capacity; seismic design parameters; and waterproofing and damp proofing foundations. Chapter 33 of the CBC contains specific requirements pertaining to site demolition, excavation, and construction to protect people and property from hazards associated with excavation cave-ins and falling debris or construction materials.

3.6.2.3 Regional

San Diego County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The 2023 San Diego County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared to comply with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 and increase disaster planning funding for the region. It is intended to educate the public, help serve as a decision-making tool, supplement and enhance local policies regarding disaster planning, and improve multi-jurisdiction coordination. The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan identifies coastal storms/erosion/tsunamis, dam failure, earthquakes, and landslides among the top hazards in the County due to the potential loss of life, injuries, and damage to property, as well as the potential for associated disruptions of public services.

3.6.2.4 District

Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Design Guides and Standards

Section 2.1, Design Guides and Standards, outlines general procedures and standards for new construction and building modifications on District campuses.

Building Programming Standards

The Building Related Programming section states that building additions on District properties require that the existing portion of the building be surveyed to determine compliance (or noncompliance) with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), CBC (seismic related design) and the absence or presence of toxic substances (asbestos, lead-based paint, others).

Stormwater Management

The Stormwater Management section of the Design Guides and Standards includes requirements for compliance with SWRCB permits. Specifically, this section requires projects that would disturb less than one acre to prepare a Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP) to manage sediment, materials, waste, and other pollutants in stormwater. Further, this section states that projects which would disturb more than one acre are subject to the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit for stormwater discharges associated with construction and land disturbance activities (Order WQ 2022-0057-DWQ NPDES No. CAS000002). A Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) identifying site-specific best management practices (BMPs) must be developed to meet Construction General Permit requirements based on the project's risk level.

General Specifications

Section 2.2, of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes general specifications and product and material data for the construction of District projects. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs. The following general specifications related to geology and soils are anticipated to apply to future projects

Geotechnical Requirements

The Geotechnical Requirements section of the General Specifications states that a project-specific geotechnical and seismic report is required for all new construction and must undergo DOC review as part of the DSA approval process and adhere to Note 48 requirements. Specific requirements for the geotechnical and seismic report are outlined for areas such as earthwork specifications and documentation, stormwater infiltration, subsurface conditions, foundations and structural support, expansive soils and corrosive materials, slab and pavement support, geologic and fault evaluation, seismic response and hazard mitigation, and overall documentation.

Earthwork Requirements

The Earthwork Requirements section of the General Specifications states that earthwork and grading design shall follow the recommendations provided in the project-specific geotechnical report, which serves as the basis for all site preparation, excavation, fill, and slope stability strategies. The geotechnical report shall guide the design team in determining suitable excavation methods, compaction requirements, allowable bearing pressures, and subgrade preparation for both structural and non-structural areas. All grading activities shall account for site-specific soil conditions and be coordinated with the geotechnical engineer of record. The Earthwork Requirements also include specifications for cut and fill operations, reuse of native soils, slopes, grading, and drainage design.

3.6.2.5 Local (Non-Regulatory)

While the District is not subject to local zoning or land use planning documents, the campus is located adjacent to the City's right-of-way (ROW) and could require work within these areas. City plans and policies also provide relevant background information that is considered in the project impact analysis given the geologic setting for the project is consistent with that in the surrounding portions of the City. Therefore, a summary of City policies related to geologic hazards and grading is provided below.

City of San Diego Seismic Safety Study

The City's Seismic Safety Study Geologic Hazards and Faults maps document the known and suspected geologic hazards and faults in the City. The maps show potential hazards and rates them by relative risk, on a scale from nominal to high. The Seismic Safety Study is intended to serve as a tool to determine the level of geotechnical review to be required by the City for planning, development, or building permits. While the District is not required to follow the City's guidance for further site-specific geotechnical investigations, these generalized maps provide guidance on geologic hazards within the project site.

City of San Diego Land Development Code

The City's Land Development Code sets forth the regulations that apply to the development of land in the City, and comprises Chapters 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15 of the San Diego Municipal Code. Per San Diego Municipal Code Section 129.0602, grading permits are required for any grading within open space easements or City-owned open space; any grading required for the restoration of unauthorized grading; any grading within the Special Flood Hazard Area; any grading in accordance with a Grading Permit required as a condition of a development permit to assure compliance with the development permit conditions; and other specific grading activities based on factors such as slopes, total graded area, or proposed fill content.

San Diego Municipal Code Paleontological Regulations

San Diego Municipal Code Section 142.0151 establishes the following paleontological resources requirements for grading activities:

a) Paleontological resources monitoring shall be required in accordance with the General Grading Guidelines for Paleontological Resources in the Land Development Manual for any of the following:

   (1) Grading that involves 1,000 cubic yards or greater, and 10 feet or greater in depth, in a High Resource Potential Geologic Deposit/Formation/Rock Unit; or

   (2) Grading that involves 2,000 cubic yards or greater, and 10 feet or greater in depth, in Moderate Resource Potential Geologic Deposit/Formation/Rock Unit; or

   (3) Grading on a fossil recovery site or within 100 feet of the mapped location of a fossil recovery site.

If paleontological resources, as defined in the General Grading Guidelines for Paleontological Resources, are discovered during grading, notwithstanding Land Development Code Section 142.0151(a), all grading in the area of discovery is required to cease until a qualified paleontological monitor has observed the discovery, and the discovery has been recovered in accordance with the City's General Grading Guidelines for Paleontological Resources.

3.6.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential geology and soils impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant geology and soils impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

   a. Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault;

   b. Strong seismic ground shaking;

   c. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or

   d. Landslides;

2. Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil;

3. Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse;

4. Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property;

5. Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater; or

6. Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geological feature.

To determine the potential for the project to result in impacts to paleontological resources, the District considered the City's adopted paleontological significance thresholds appropriate guidance to the evaluation of paleontological resource impacts given the presence of geologic units on campus consistent with surrounding areas of the City. While the City typically utilizes a 10-foot depth threshold, this depth threshold was revised in the project-specific threshold given the prior grading of campus. Instead, a project-specific depth threshold would be established based on the depth of artificial fill in proposed areas of excavation. Based on the City's guidelines and site-specific adjustment, potential impacts to paleontological resources would be considered significant if the project would:

- Require over 1,000 cubic yards of excavation in a high paleontological resource potential geologic deposit/formation/rock unit below the depths of documented or undocumented artificial fill or, where this information cannot be determined, more than two feet below grade; or

- Require over 2,000 cubic yards of excavation in a moderate paleontological resource potential geologic deposit/formation/rock unit below the depths of documented or undocumented artificial fill or, where this information cannot be determined, more than two feet below grade; or

- Require grading within 100 feet of a fossil recovery site or near a fossil recovery site in the same geologic deposit/formation/rock unit as the project site.

3.6.4 Impact Analysis

3.6.4.1 Seismic Hazards

Threshold 1: Would the project directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map; strong seismic ground shaking; seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction; or landslides?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Ground Rupture

The potential for ground surface rupture as a result of active faulting is considered low on the campus due to the absence of known active faults exist on the campus or within the vicinity. However, lurching or cracking of the ground surface as a result of nearby seismic events is possible. The potential risk would be required to be assessed as part of a comprehensive geotechnical and fault hazard evaluation performed prior to project development and in accordance with CBC Chapter 18A and CGS Note 48, which includes requirements for geotechnical evaluation of public-school sites. Conformance to building

construction standards for seismic safety within the CBC would ensure that proposed structures implemented under the CMP would be able to withstand seismic events in the region. As such, with conformance to applicable CGS and CBC regulations, future projects implemented under the CMP would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault.

Ground Shaking

As discussed in Section 3.6.1, the Rose Canyon Fault Zone, the nearest active fault system, has been mapped approximately 2.4 miles west of campus. This fault zone is capable of producing a maximum moment magnitude of 6.9 and the project site has a high potential for strong ground motion due to earthquakes on nearby active faults. The risk and associated design recommendations for strong ground motion would be required to be evaluated for new structures implemented under the CMP in accordance with CBC Chapter 18A and CGS Note 48. Therefore, adherence to applicable CBC and CGS standards would ensure that future projects implemented under the CMP would not cause substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death, associated with ground shaking.

Ground Failure and Liquefaction

The westernmost portion of the project site is underlain by alluvium and shallow groundwater; therefore, these areas may be susceptible to liquefaction and settlement hazards. As such, the potential for liquefaction at individual project locations would be evaluated by a comprehensive geotechnical evaluation in accordance with CBC Chapter 18A and CGS Note 48. This geotechnical evaluation would determine whether specific structural design techniques would be required at the project level to address hazards from liquefaction or seismic settlement. Common and appropriate methods for evaluating and designing structures to withstand liquefaction potential and other seismic-related ground failures are provided in CGS Special Publication 117A. If it is determined that a project implemented under the CMP could be exposed to ground failure or liquefaction, applicable construction techniques may include in-situ ground modification, removal of liquefiable layers and replacement with compacted fill, or support of structures with piles to sufficient depths to avoid damage as a result of liquefaction or seismic settlement. Implementation of the construction methods specified in the geotechnical report would ensure that projects implemented under the CMP do not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving ground failure or liquefaction.

Landslides

As discussed further in Section 3.6.1.2 above, landslides have not been mapped or observed on the project site. Therefore, the potential for adverse effects from existing landslides is considered low. However, slopes and lower-lying areas of the project site are mapped as being susceptible to landslides and an area of unfavorable geologic structure is mapped in the northwestern portion of the project site. As such, slope stability at individual project locations would be further evaluated in project-level comprehensive geotechnical evaluations, which would include project-specific recommendations for structural design where a risk of landslides is identified. Implementation of the CMP would not directly or indirectly cause substantial adverse effects related to landslides.

Project-Level

Ground Rupture

As discussed in the program-level analysis above, the potential for ground surface rupture as a result of active faulting is considered low on the campus, which would include the locations of the near-term projects. While lurching or cracking of the ground surface as a result of nearby seismic events is possible, the near-term projects would be required to comply with applicable CGS and CBC regulations to identify and incorporate geotechnical design measures based on site-specific risks. The near-term projects implemented under the CMP would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault.

Ground Shaking

The near-term projects would be located over two miles east of the nearest active fault zone but would be at risk for strong ground motion. The risk and appropriate design recommendations for strong ground motion would be required to be evaluated during the preparation of the site-specific geotechnical evaluations for both of the near-term projects in accordance with CBC Chapter 18A and CGS Note 48. Therefore, adherence to applicable CBC and CGS standards would ensure that the near-term projects would not cause substantial adverse effects associated with ground shaking.

Ground Failure and Liquefaction

As discussed above, the westernmost portion of the campus is underlain by alluvium and shallow groundwater and therefore susceptible to liquefaction and settlement hazards. However, the proposed near-term projects would be located on the eastern portion of the campus where, based on the density of soils, liquefaction or settlement hazards are not anticipated (Figure 3.6-1). Nevertheless, site-specific geotechnical reports would be required to be prepared for both of the near-term projects to determine if specific engineering recommendations apply to these projects. Implementation of the near-term projects under the CMP would not cause substantial adverse effects associated with ground failure or liquefaction.

Landslides

As discussed in the program-level analysis above, landslides have not been mapped on the project site but site slopes and lower-lying areas of the project site are mapped as being susceptible to landslides and an area of unfavorable geologic structure is mapped in the northwest portion of the project site. However, both of the proposed near-term projects would be located on the eastern portion of the campus and would not be located in the area identified as an unfavorable geologic structure (refer to Figure 3.6-1). Implementation of the near-term projects under the CMP would not cause substantial adverse effects associated with landslides.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Given adherence to applicable building codes and incorporation of geotechnical study recommendations, future projects implemented under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial adverse effects related to ground rupture, ground shaking, ground failure, or landslides. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.6.4.2 Soil Erosion

Threshold 2: Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Grading, excavation, demolition, and construction activities associated with implementation of future projects under the CMP could expose topsoil, thereby increasing the potential for erosion. The soil units mapped on the campus are considered to have negligible erosion potential. Graded or excavated areas would be stabilized through the installation of hardscape and landscaping once construction is complete; therefore, erosion potential would primarily be a concern during construction activities. Earth-disturbing activities associated with construction would be temporary and the potential for erosion effects would depend largely on the areas disturbed, the quantity of disturbance, and the length of time soils are subject to conditions resulting in erosion. As discussed further in Section 3.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, projects proposed under the CMP that would disturb more than one acre would be required to prepare and submit a Notice of Intent and a SWPPP, to the RWQCB demonstrating compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. For projects which would disturb less than one acre, a WPCP would be developed to manage sediment, materials, waste, and other pollutants and prevent them from entering stormwater. Short-term erosion and sedimentation potential associated with construction activities would be addressed through conformance with the NPDES or WPCP, which require the development of erosion and sedimentation control plans based on individual project site characteristics. The erosion and sedimentation control plan developed for each project would identify the required BMPs to avoid erosion during construction. The final BMPs required during construction would be determined during preparation of a project-specific SWPPPs but would include standard measures such as dust control, waste management, and silt fencing installation. Further, projects implemented under the CMP would be required to comply with the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual which includes earthwork and grading design recommendations to reduce the potential for erosion. As such, with adherence to applicable NPDES permit and District requirements, CMP implementation would not result in substantial erosion or the loss of topsoil.

Project-Level

Implementation of the near-term projects under the CMP would require construction activities that would increase the short-term potential for erosion. Graded or excavated areas of these project sites would be stabilized through the installation of hardscape and landscaping once operational and there would be no long-term effect related to soil erosion. The near-term projects are anticipated to disturb more than one acre and would therefore be required to prepare and submit a Notice of Intent and a SWPPP to the RWQCB demonstrating compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit as discussed under the program-level analysis above. The project-specific SWPPPs would include site-specific BMP requirements, including dust control, waste management, and silt fencing installation to reduce erosion potential. With adherence to applicable NPDES permit conditions as well as District requirements for earthwork and grading design, the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not result in substantial erosion or the loss of topsoil.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

With adherence to applicable NPDES permit conditions and District requirements, implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.6.4.3 Geologic Instability

Threshold 3: Would the project be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the Project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Soils on the Mesa College campus are not generally susceptible to land subsidence. However, campus slopes and lower-lying areas of the project site are mapped as being susceptible to landslides, and slopes in the northwest portion of the project site are mapped as having unfavorable geologic structure and may be susceptible to landsliding. In addition, potential soil settlement as a result of construction dewatering and liquefaction in the westernmost portion of the project site is possible. These risks would be evaluated by a design-level geotechnical evaluation performed for individual projects proposed under the CMP in accordance with Chapter 18A of the CBC, CGS Note 48, and the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. Where slope instability and/or soil settlements are identified as a potential hazard, appropriate engineering measures would be incorporated during construction as recommended in the design-level geotechnical evaluation or by the project structural engineer. These recommendations could include removal and/or replacement of soils as engineered compacted fill. The CMP would not result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse as a result of being located on an unstable geologic unit.

Project-Level

Neither of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would be located in the northwest portion of campus mapped as having unfavorable geologic structure and they are not anticipated to be susceptible to land subsidence or landsliding. Nevertheless, a design-level geotechnical evaluation would be required for both of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP in accordance with Chapter 18A of the CBC, CGS Note 48, and the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. The geotechnical review would include an evaluation of geologic stability and prescribe engineering measures as appropriate. The near-term projects implemented under the CMP would not result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse as a result of being located on an unstable geologic unit.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

With adherence to applicable recommendations in project-specific geotechnical evaluations, implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse as a result of being located on a

geologic unit or soil that is unstable. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.6.4.4 Expansive Soil

Threshold 4: Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The soils and earth materials at the project site are expected to have a range of expansion potential, from very low to high potential. Soil conditions at future project locations would be further evaluated by geotechnical laboratory testing as part of the required design level geotechnical evaluation performed in accordance with CBC Chapter 18A and CGS Note 48. In addition, projects implemented under the CMP would be required to implement the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which includes requirements to identify expansive soils and provide treatment strategies as part of the project-specific geotechnical report required for District projects. Such treatment strategies may include the compaction of expansive soils or their removal and replacement with less expansive fill material. Therefore, although expansive soils may exist on the campus, compliance with the CBC, CGS, and District requirements for treatment of expansive soils would ensure that future projects implemented under the CMP would not create a substantial direct or indirect risk to life or property.

Project-Level

As is the case across campus, the near-term projects proposed under the CMP could be underlain by soils and earth materials with very low to high potential for expansion. Soil conditions would be further evaluated by geotechnical laboratory testing as part of a design level geotechnical evaluation required for the near-term projects. As discussed under the program-level analysis above, this would occur in accordance with CBC Chapter 18A, CGS Note 48, and the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. Compliance with applicable requirements for expansive soil treatment, if identified in the near-term project locations, would ensure that the near-term projects would not create a substantial direct or indirect risk to life or property as a result of expansive soils.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

With compliance with the CBC, CGS, and District requirements for expansive soil, implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not create substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property as a result of being located on expansive soil. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.6.4.5 Septic Tanks

Threshold 5: Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Projects implemented under the CMP would rely on the existing sanitary sewer system within and in the vicinity of campus and would not use septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, the future projects implemented under the CMP would not require soils capable of supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would connect to existing sewer facilities within and surrounding campus; no septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems would be required.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the proposed near-term projects, would not require the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. There would be **no program-level or project-level impact**. No mitigation is required.

3.6.4.6 Paleontological Resources

Threshold 6: Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As discussed under Section 3.6.1.3, the project site is primarily underlain by geologic units assigned a moderate paleontological resource sensitivity (Lindavista Formation) and high paleontological resource sensitivity (the Stadium Conglomerate, Friars Formation, and Scripps Formation), with some areas additionally underlain at the surface by unmapped geologic units assigned no paleontological resource sensitivity (previously placed fill deposits) or low paleontological resource sensitivity (young alluvial flood plain deposits). Only excavation activities within previously undisturbed deposits of the Lindavista Formation, Stadium Conglomerate, Friars Formation, or Scripps Formation have the potential to result in disturbance of paleontological resources. Refer to Figure 3.6-2, *Paleontological Sensitivity Areas*.

As described in Section 3.6.3 above, a site-specific threshold of significance was developed to assess potential paleontological resource impacts based on guidance from the City's significance determination thresholds. Potential impacts to paleontological resources would be considered significant if a project would require over 1,000 cubic yards of excavation in a high paleontological sensitivity geologic unit or over 2,000 yards of excavation in a moderate paleontological sensitivity geologic unit at depths below the location of no or low paleontological sensitivity geologic units (or below two feet where this

information is unavailable), or if excavation would occur within 100 feet of a previously documented fossil collection locality.

Generally, demolition of existing facilities would not require disturbance of previously undisturbed bedrock deposits, as most earthwork associated with demolition is anticipated to affect previously placed artificial fill that was imported during original construction of the facilities. Interior renovations and most minor construction occurring at existing campus buildings would also be unlikely to result in significant disturbance to paleontological resources in previously undisturbed soils, though the specific details of each project would need to be evaluated on a case-by-case basis using the project-specific thresholds. Construction of replacement facilities within the campus is anticipated to involve ground disturbing activities such as grading, excavation, trenching, and other work that would disturb soil units with moderate or high paleontological sensitivity. Therefore, implementation of the CMP has the potential to directly or indirectly destroy unique paleontological resources.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

The Athletics Complex project site is underlain by strata of the Lindavista Formation, which are in turn underlain by the Stadium Conglomerate and/or Friars Formation. It is assumed that previously placed artificial fill associated with construction of existing fields and facilities is present as well. Demolition of the existing athletics facilities and removal of site utilities are anticipated to primarily affect the upper layers of previously placed artificial fill and are therefore unlikely to affect previously undisturbed deposits of the Lindavista Formation, Stadium Conglomerate, or Friars Formation. However, construction of the Athletics Complex project involving grading and utility replacement is anticipated to affect previously undisturbed deposits of the Lindavista Formation (moderate sensitivity), Stadium Conglomerate (high sensitivity), and/or Friars Formation (high sensitivity). Therefore, construction of the Athletics Complex project has the potential to disturb paleontological resources.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

The upper portion of the hillside where the proposed Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project is proposed is directly underlain by the Lindavista Formation (moderate sensitivity), as well as limited volumes of previously placed artificial fill. It assumed that the Friars Formation underlies the Lindavista Formation at depths greater than 15 feet below the ground surface (as measured from the top of the mesa) and is present at shallower depths or near the surface further downslope to the north (see areas symbolized in red in Figure 3.6-2).

Demolition of the existing surface parking lot is anticipated to primarily affect previously placed asphalt base, and is therefore considered unlikely to disturb previously undisturbed deposits of the Lindavista Formation or Friars Formation. However, construction of the new Performing Arts Center and Parking Structure project, including site grading and utility installation, is anticipated to affect previously undisturbed deposits of the Lindavista Formation (moderate sensitivity) and Friars Formation (high sensitivity). Therefore, construction of the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project has the potential to disturb paleontological resources.



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Source: Aerial (SanGIS 2023)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Paleontological Sensitivity Areas

Figure 3.6-2

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, has the potential to disturb paleontological resources, and the **program-level and project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

The following mitigation measures apply to future CMP projects located in moderate and high paleontological sensitivity areas. Refer to Figure 3.6-2.

GEO-1 Initial Project Review. Project grading plans for projects located within previously undisturbed moderate or high sensitivity areas (Lindavista Formation, Stadium Conglomerate, Friars Formation, and/or Scripps Formation) shall be reviewed by the District or its Designated Representative(s) to determine the total cut volume associated with construction of the project. If available, a project-specific geotechnical investigation report shall be consulted to determine where and at what depths these geologic units would be impacted. In the absence of site-specific geotechnical data, it shall be assumed that unweathered deposits of the Lindavista Formation, Stadium Conglomerate, Friars Formation, and/or Scripps Formation are present at depths of 2 feet or more below existing grade. Finally, if a paleontological records search has not been conducted within one year of proposed project construction, an updated paleontological records search shall be requested from the SDNHM to determine whether there are documented fossil collection localities present within or within 100 feet of the site.

Based on the results of the above review, one of the following scenarios shall apply:

- If the total cut volume exceeds 1,000 cubic yards in a high resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit or exceeds 2,000 cubic yards of excavation in a moderate resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit and excavation would exceed the project-specific depth threshold determined above, implementation of GEO-2 and GEO-3 shall be required.

- If the total cut volume is less than 1,000 cubic yards in a high resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit and less than 2,000 cubic yards of excavation in a moderate resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit and excavation would exceed the project-specific depth threshold determined above and the project occurs on or within 100 feet of an existing fossil locality, implementation of GEO-2 and GEO-3 shall be required.

- If the total cut volume exceeds 1,000 cubic yards in a high resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit or exceeds 2,000 cubic yards of excavation in a moderate resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit and excavation would not exceed the project-specific depth threshold determined above (regardless of proximity to existing fossil localities), implementation of GEO-4 shall be required.

- If the total cut volume is less than 1,000 cubic yards in a high resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit and less than 2,000 cubic yards of excavation in a moderate resource sensitivity geologic deposit/formation/rock unit and the project does not occur on

or within 100 feet of an existing fossil collection locality (regardless of excavation depth), implementation of GEO-4 shall be required.

GEO-2 Monitoring. Prior to the commencement of construction, a qualified Project Paleontologist shall be retained by the District or its Designated Representative(s) to oversee the mitigation program (a Project Paleontologist is a person with a Ph.D. or Master's Degree in Paleontology or related field, and who has knowledge of San Diego County paleontology and documented experience in professional paleontological procedures and techniques). In addition, a regional fossil repository shall be designated to receive discovered fossils (because the Project is in the County of San Diego, the recommended repository is the SDNHM). The Project Paleontologist shall review available geotechnical data and project construction plans prior to the start of monitoring to determine precisely where and at what depths paleontological monitoring should occur.

The Project Paleontologist or a designated representative shall attend the Project pre-construction meeting to consult with the grading and excavation contractors and environmental and engineering staff concerning excavation schedules, paleontological monitoring requirements and field techniques, and safety issues.

A paleontological monitor (working under the direction of the Project Paleontologist) shall be on-site on a full-time basis during all earthwork impacting previously undisturbed deposits of the Stadium Conglomerate, Friars Formation, or Scripps Formation and on a part-time basis during earthwork impacting previously undisturbed deposits of the Lindavista Formation to inspect exposures for unearthed fossils. Monitoring should include testing for the presence of microfossils, which can be accomplished by collecting and screenwashing test samples of potentially fossil-bearing sediment, as deemed appropriate by the Project Paleontologist. Monitoring may be reduced or terminated at the discretion of the Project Paleontologist based on the results of initial monitoring.

If no fossils are discovered during monitoring, an abbreviated summary report shall be prepared at the completion of monitoring and submitted to the District to signal completion of the mitigation program.

GEO-3 Treatment of Fossil Discoveries. If fossils are discovered, the Project Paleontologist (or paleontological monitor) shall evaluate their significance, document, and recover them. In most cases, fossil recovery can be completed in a short period of time. However, some fossil specimens (e.g., a partial or complete large mammal skeleton) may require an extended salvage period. In these instances, the Project Paleontologist (or paleontological monitor) has the authority to temporarily direct, divert, or halt earthwork within 50 feet of the discovery site to allow recovery of fossil remains in a timely manner.

Fossil remains collected during monitoring and salvage shall be cleaned, repaired, sorted, identified, and catalogued as part of the mitigation program. Prepared fossils, along with copies of all pertinent field notes, photos, and maps, shall be deposited (as a donation) in the designated fossil repository. Fossils shall be deposited in the designated fossil repository within 90 days of completion of monitoring unless the Project Paleontologist determines that more time is required to prepare, stabilize, and/or curate the recovered fossils and communicates this revised timeline to the District and the designated fossil repository. Donation of the fossils shall

be accompanied by financial support for initial specimen storage, provided by the District or its Designated Representative(s).

If fossils were discovered and salvaged during monitoring, an expanded summary report shall be prepared in place of the abbreviated summary report required under GEO-2. The report shall detail the results of the mitigation program, and shall include discussions of the methods used, stratigraphic section(s) exposed, recovered fossils and their significance, and an inventory list of catalogued fossils. The summary report shall be submitted to the designated fossil repository and to the District to signal completion of the mitigation program.

GEO-4 Inadvertent Fossil Discoveries. If fossils are discovered during construction when a paleontological monitor is not on site (i.e., during earthwork that was not anticipated to encounter paleontological resources), a 50-foot buffer shall be established around the discovery site and work shall cease in this area. The construction contractor shall contact the District and the District shall contact a qualified Project Paleontologist to evaluate the discovery and its significance. The Project Paleontologist shall recommend whether further mitigation (i.e., monitoring of remaining earthwork and treatment of the fossil discovery, as outlined in GEO-2 and GEO-3) is required. The Project Paleontologist shall document their recommendation in a memo submitted to the District, after which work may resume in the location of the discovery.

Project-Level

Mitigation measures GEO-1 and GEO-4 would apply to construction of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP. Depending on the results of initial project review in mitigation measure GEO-1, mitigation measures GEO-2 and GEO-3 may also be required.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures GEO-1 through GEO-4 would reduce program-level impacts to paleontological resources to a level that is **less than significant**.

Project-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures GEO-1 through GEO-4, as applicable, would reduce project-level impacts to paleontological resources to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.6.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Impacts related to geology and soils are generally site-specific, as risks associated with geologic settings in one location do not result in associated geologic failure elsewhere. Therefore, the geographic area for the analysis of cumulative impacts related to geology and soils consists of properties adjacent to the Mesa College campus, except for impacts related to erosion and paleontological resources. The geographic area for the cumulative impact analysis related to erosion would be the HA for the project site (Tecolote HA), while the geographic area for cumulative impacts related to the regional loss of paleontological resources would be the City.

3.6.5.1 Seismic Hazards

Cumulative development projects would be sited within an area subject to seismic activity similar to the project site. Some of the cumulative projects would locate structures where there is potential for adverse effects including risk of loss, injury, or death due to rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, liquefaction, or landslides. However, projects that could be exposed to these geologic hazards would be required to prepare project-specific geotechnical and/or soil investigations, and potential hazards would be avoided through incorporation of site-specific recommendations for design and construction. Projects proposed adjacent to the campus would be within the City and therefore be required to comply with applicable San Diego Municipal Code requirements, in addition to CBC regulations. Compliance with site-specific recommendations and state and local regulations would avoid the potential for cumulative impacts concerning seismic hazards. As projects implemented under the CMP would also incorporate these geotechnical recommendations during construction of individual projects, cumulative impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.6.5.2 Soil Erosion

Similar to the proposed CMP, cumulative development projects could also involve construction activities that result in temporary soil erosion or loss of topsoil. However, like projects implemented under the CMP, cumulative projects which would disturb more than one acre would be required to prepare and submit a Notice of Intent and a SWPPP, to the RWQCB demonstrating compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit and implement BMPs outlined in the associated erosion and sedimentation control plan. For projects under one acre in the City, a WPCP with site-specific construction stormwater BMPs would be prepared and submitted to the City for approval. Once operational, graded or excavated areas would be stabilized through the installation of hardscape and landscaping similar to the CMP projects. As such, cumulative impacts related to soil erosion would be **less than significant**.

3.6.5.3 Geologic Instability

Similar to the proposed CMP, cumulative development projects would be required to adhere to applicable recommendations in project-specific geotechnical evaluations related to on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse risks as a result of being located on located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable. Cumulative development could be sited within an area subject to geologic instability, but with implementation of applicable design recommendations to ensure no substantial impacts related to geologic instability occur, their impacts would be less than significant similar to the CMP. As such, cumulative impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.6.5.4 Expansive Soil

Cumulative development projects would be required to comply with the CBC, CGS, and local requirements for expansive soils, similar to the CMP, including the near-term projects, and would therefore not create substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property as a result of expansive soils. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to expansive soil would be **less than significant**.

3.6.5.5 Septic Tanks

Similar to projects proposed under the CMP, cumulative projects are anticipated to rely on the existing sanitary sewer system that serves the campus and surrounding development and would not use septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Should the cumulative projects require the use of

septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems, an analysis of on-site soils would be required to ensure that the specific site can adequately support these systems. As such, implementation of the CMP in combination with cumulative development would not result in significant cumulative impacts related to septic tanks or alternative wastewater systems and cumulative impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.6.5.6 Paleontological Resources

As discussed in Section 3.6.4.6, the Mesa College campus is underlain by geologic units with moderate to high paleontological sensitivity, and projects proposed in these areas would be required to follow the mitigation framework outlined in mitigation measures GEO-1 through GEO-4. Some cumulative projects could also require excavation at depths and within geologic units that could potentially expose or damage paleontological resources. However, these projects would be required to comply with San Diego Municipal Code Section 142.0151 (Paleontological Regulations), which addresses potential impacts to paleontological resources through construction monitoring programs and treatment and/or curation requirements for discovered fossils similar to the mitigation framework outlined for the CMP. With the implementation of such mitigation measures and adherence to City regulations, cumulative impacts to paleontological resources from the identified cumulative projects would be considered **less than significant**.

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3.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

This section addresses the potential greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to GHG emissions are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analysis in the Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Report (HELIX 2026), provided as Appendix B to the PEIR.

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

3.7.1.1 Climate Change Overview

Global climate change refers to changes in average climatic conditions on Earth, including temperature, wind patterns, precipitation, and storms. Global temperatures are moderated by atmospheric gases. These gases are commonly referred to as GHGs because they function similar to a greenhouse by letting sunlight in but preventing heat from escaping, thus warming the Earth's atmosphere.

GHGs are emitted by natural processes and human (anthropogenic) activities. Anthropogenic GHG emissions are primarily associated with: (1) the burning of fossil fuels during motorized transport, electricity generation, natural gas consumption, industrial activity, manufacturing, and other activities; (2) deforestation; (3) agricultural activity; and (4) solid waste decomposition.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) temperature records show a decades-long trend of warming, indicating that 2024 was the warmest year on record since 1880, with global temperatures approximately 2.3 degrees Fahrenheit (°F; or about 1.28 degrees Celsius) warmer than the twentieth century baseline (1951 through 1980) and 2.65°F (1.47 degrees Celsius) warmer than the late nineteenth century (1850 through 1900) preindustrial average (NASA 2025). The 10 most recent years (2014 through 2024) have been the warmest on record (NASA 2025). GHG emissions from human activities are the most significant driver of observed climate change since the mid-twentieth century (United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change [IPCC] 2014). The IPCC constructed several emission trajectories of GHGs needed to stabilize global temperatures and climate change impacts. The statistical models show a "high confidence" that the global temperature increase caused by anthropogenic GHG emissions could be kept to less than two degrees Celsius relative to pre-industrial levels if atmospheric concentrations are stabilized at about 450 parts per million (ppm) carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) by the year 2100 (IPCC 2014).

3.7.1.2 Greenhouse Gases of Primary Concern

The GHGs, as defined under California's Assembly Bill (AB) 32, include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxide (N_2O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6). Although water vapor is the most abundant and variable GHG in the atmosphere, it is not considered a pollutant; it maintains a climate necessary for life.

Carbon Dioxide. CO_2 is the most important and common anthropogenic GHG. CO_2 is an odorless, colorless GHG. Natural sources include the decomposition of dead organic matter; respiration of bacteria, plants, animals, and fungi; evaporation from oceans; and volcanic outgassing. Anthropogenic sources of CO_2 include burning fuels, such as coal, oil, natural gas, and wood. Data from ice cores indicate that CO_2 concentrations remained steady prior to the current period of anthropogenic

influences for approximately 10,000 years. The atmospheric CO_2 concentration in 2010 was 390 ppm, 39 percent above the concentration at the start of the Industrial Revolution (about 280 ppm in 1750). As of February 2026, the CO_2 concentration exceeded 429 ppm, an approximately 53 percent increase since 1750 (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] 2026).

Methane. CH_4 is a gas and is the main component of natural gas used in homes. A natural source of CH_4 is the decay of organic matter. Geological deposits known as natural gas fields contain CH_4, which is extracted for fuel. Other sources are from the decay of organic material in landfills, fermentation of manure, and cattle digestion.

Nitrous Oxide. N_2O is produced by both natural and human-related sources. N_2O is emitted during agricultural and industrial activities, as well as during the combustion of fossil fuels and solid waste. Primary human-related sources of N_2O are agricultural soil management, animal manure management, sewage treatment, mobile and stationary combustion of fossil fuel, adipic (fatty) acid production, and nitric acid production.

Fluorocarbons. Fluorocarbons are gases formed synthetically by replacing all hydrogen atoms in CH_4 or ethane with chlorine and/or fluorine atoms. Chlorofluorocarbons are nontoxic, nonflammable, insoluble, and chemically nonreactive in the troposphere (the level of air at Earth's surface). Chlorofluorocarbons were first synthesized in 1928 for use as refrigerants, aerosol propellants, and cleaning solvents. They destroy stratospheric ozone; therefore, their production was stopped as required by the Montreal Protocol. PFCs and HFCs are synthetic gases used primarily to replace Chlorofluorocarbons in similar types of uses while preventing ozone destruction; however, these gases have long atmospheric lifetimes.

Sulfur Hexafluoride. SF_6 is an inorganic, odorless, colorless, nontoxic, nonflammable gas. SF_6 is used for insulation in electric power transmission and distribution equipment, in the magnesium industry, in semiconductor manufacturing, and as a tracer gas for leak detection.

Global Warming Potential

GHGs have long atmospheric lifetimes that range from one year to several thousand years. Long atmospheric lifetimes allow for GHG emissions to disperse around the globe. Because GHG emissions vary widely in the power of their climatic effects, climate scientists have established a unit called global warming potential (GWP). The GWP of a gas is a measure of both potency and lifespan in the atmosphere as compared to CO_2. For example, because methane and N_2O are approximately 25 and 298 times more powerful than CO_2, respectively, in their ability to trap heat in the atmosphere, they have GWPs of 25 and 298, respectively (CO_2 has a GWP of 1). CO_2e is a quantity that enables all GHG emissions to be considered as a group despite their varying GWP. The GWP of each GHG is multiplied by the prevalence of that gas to quantify CO_2e.

To comply with international reporting standards under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, official emission estimates for California and the U.S. are reported using Fourth Assessment Report GWP values (IPCC 2007). By applying the GWP ratios, CO_2e emissions can be tabulated in metric tons (MT) per year. Typically, the GWP ratio corresponding to the warming potential of CO_2 over a 100-year period is used as a baseline. The atmospheric lifetime and GWP of selected GHGs are summarized in Table 3.7-1, *Global Warming Potentials and Atmospheric Lifetimes*. As shown in Table 3.7-1, the GWP for common GHGs ranges from 1 (CO_2) to 22,800 (SF_6).

Table 3.7-1
GLOBAL WARMING POTENTIALS AND ATMOSPHERIC LIFETIMES

Greenhouse Gas	Atmospheric Lifetime (years)	Global Warming Potential (100-year time horizon)
Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)	50-200	1
Methane (CH_4)	12	25
Nitrous Oxide (N_2O)	114	298
HFC-134a	14	1,430
PFC: Tetrafluoromethane (CF_4)	50,000	7,390
PFC: Hexafluoroethane (C_2F_6)	10,000	12,200
Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF_6)	3,200	22,800

Source: IPCC 2007
HFC = hydrofluorocarbon; PFC = perfluorocarbon

3.7.1.3 Greenhouse Gas Inventories

Worldwide and National Greenhouse Gas Inventory

In 2023, total anthropogenic GHG emissions worldwide were estimated at 50,800 million metric tons (MMT) of CO_2e emissions (Climate Watch 2023). The five largest emitting countries together account for about 52 percent of total global GHG emissions: China (26 percent), the U.S. (11 percent), India (8 percent), Brazil (4 percent), and Indonesia (3 percent). These countries also have the highest CO_2 emission levels (Climate Watch 2023).

Per the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Inventory of U.S. Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Sinks: 1990–2022, total U.S. GHG emissions were approximately 6,343.2 MMT CO_2e in 2022 (USEPA 2024). The primary GHG emitted by human activities in the U.S. was CO_2, which represented approximately 79.7 percent of total GHG emissions (5,053 MMT CO_2e). The largest source of CO_2, and of overall GHG emissions, was fossil fuel combustion, which accounted for approximately 93 percent of gross CO_2 emissions in 2022 (4,699.4 MMT CO_2e). Relative to 1990, gross U.S. GHG emissions in 2022 were lower by 3.0 percent, down from a high of 15.2 percent above 1990 levels in 2007. Gross emissions increased from 2021 to 2022 by 0.2 percent (14.4 MMT CO_2e). Net emissions (i.e., including sinks) were 5,489 MMT CO_2e in 2022. Overall, net emissions increased by 1.3 percent from 2021 to 2022 and decreased by 16.7 percent from 2005 levels. Between 2021 and 2022, the increase in total GHG emissions was driven largely by an increase in CO_2 emissions from fossil fuel combustion across most end-use sectors due in part to increased energy use from the continued rebound of economic activity after the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (USEPA 2024).

State Greenhouse Gas Inventory

The California Air Resources Board (CARB) performed statewide GHG inventories for the years 1990 to 2023, as shown in Table 3.7-2, *California State GHG Emissions by Sector*. The inventory is divided into seven broad sectors of economic activity: agriculture, commercial and residential, electricity generation, high GWP, industrial, recycling and waste, and transportation (CARB 2026a). For comparison, the 1990 baseline inventory for AB 32 is also shown in Table 3.7-2 (CARB 2007).

Table 3.7-2
CALIFORNIA STATE GHG EMISSIONS BY SECTOR

Sector	Emissions (MMT CO_2e)			
	1990	2000	2010	2023
Agriculture	18.9 (4%)	32.3 (7%)	33.7 (8%)	29.2 (8%)
Commercial and Residential	44.1 (10%)	44.8 (10%)	46.3 (11%)	43.3 (12%)
Electricity Generation	110.5 (26%)	104.7 (23%)	90.3 (21%)	57.2 (16%)
High Global Warming Potential	-	6.6 (1%)	13.8 (3%)	21.4 (6%)
Industrial	105.3 (24%)	86.6 (19%)	82.4 (19%)	66.9 (19%)
Recycling and Waste	-	7.1 (2%)	7.9 (2%)	8.6 (2%)
Transportation	150.6 (35%)	176.5 (38%)	161.9 (37%)	133.7 (37%)
Unspecified Remaining	1.3 (<1%)	0.0 (0%)	0.0 (0%)	0.0 (0%)
Total	**430.7**	**458.7**	**436.2**	**360.4**

Source: CARB 2007; CARB 2026a
MMT = million metric tons; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

As shown in Table 3.7-2, statewide GHG source emissions totaled 430.7 MMT CO_2e in 1990, 458.7 MMT CO_2e in 2000, 436.2 MMT CO_2e in 2010, and 360.4 MMT CO_2e in 2023. Transportation-related emissions consistently contribute the most GHG emissions, followed by industrial and electricity generation emissions.

Existing Campus Greenhouse Gas Emissions

GHG emissions associated with existing campus development were estimated using CalEEMod as further described in Section 3.7.4.1. Emission sources were modeled based on the methodology further described in Section 4.1 of Appendix B. Table 3.7-3, *Existing Operational GHG Emissions,* shows the model-calculated GHG emissions associated with the existing uses at the project site modeled for the CMP buildout year (2045). The model additionally included the 2045 adjustment factors published by CARB for the on-road vehicle (mobile source) exhaust emissions to account for legislative updates. CalEEMod output files for existing conditions are included in Appendix A, *Existing Campus CalEEMod Output*, of Appendix B to the PEIR.

Table 3.7-3
EXISTING OPERATIONAL GHG EMISSIONS

Emission Sources	Existing Emissions (MT CO_2e)
Mobile	9,008.3
Area	19.3
Energy	4,428.7
Water/Wastewater	27.8
Solid Waste	418.2
Refrigerants	0.6
TOTAL[1]	**13,902.9**

Source: HELIX 2026
[1] Totals may not sum due to rounding.
MT = metric tons; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

3.7.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to GHG emissions is provided below.

3.7.2.1 Federal

Federal Clean Air Act

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on April 2, 2007, in *Massachusetts v. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency* that CO_2 is an air pollutant, as defined under the federal Clean Air Act (CAA), and that the USEPA has the authority to regulate emissions of GHGs. The USEPA then established the Endangerment Finding in 2009, concluding that GHGs (including CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, HFC, PFC, and SF_6) threaten the public health and welfare of the American people (USEPA 2026). This action was a prerequisite to finalizing the USEPA's GHG emissions standards for light-duty vehicles, which were jointly proposed by the USEPA and the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT's) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

On June 30, 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court decision published in *West Virginia v. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency* overturned the USEPA's Clean Power Plan rule which cited Section 111(d) of the federal CAA for authority to set limits on CO_2 emissions from existing coal- and natural-gas-fired power plants. The June 30, 2022 decision does not overturn the April 2, 2007 decision; however, it may limit the USEPA's authority to develop rules limiting GHG emissions without clear congressional authorization.

On February 12, 2026, the USEPA rescinded the 2009 Endangerment Finding, thus removing the federal obligation to regulate pollutants such as CO_2, CH_4, N_2O, HFC, PFC, and SF_6 that had previously been identified as potential threats to public health and welfare. Litigation remains ongoing; however, the rescission may further restrict the USEPA's ability to implement existing and future regulations limiting GHG emissions. Regardless of these federal regulatory changes, California retains independent authority to establish goals for GHG emissions reduction and regulate GHG emissions from certain sources under state law, as described in Section 3.7.2.2, below.

Light-Duty Vehicle Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards and Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards

The USEPA and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration worked together on developing a national program of regulations to reduce GHG emissions and improve fuel economy of light-duty vehicles. The USEPA established the first-ever national GHG emissions standards under the federal CAA, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration established Corporate Average Fuel Economy (CAFE) standards under the Energy Policy and Conservation Act. On April 1, 2010, the USEPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced a joint Final Rulemaking that established standards for 2012 through 2016 model year vehicles. This was followed up on October 15, 2012, when the agencies issued a Final Rulemaking with standards for model years 2017 through 2025.

In December 2021, USEPA issued a new rule formally adopting standards previously proposed in August 2021 for model years 2023 and 2024 and finalizing more stringent standards than previously proposed for model years 2025 and 2026. The rule assumes a 17 percent electric vehicle (EV) market penetration by 2026. Although this is a departure from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration CAFE standards, USEPA did coordinate with National Highway Traffic Safety

Administration during the development of the new standards. On March 20, 2024, USEPA announced new, more ambitious final standards to further reduce harmful air pollutant emissions from light-duty and medium-duty vehicles starting with model year 2027. The final standards build upon USEPA's final standards for federal GHG emissions standards for passenger cars and light trucks for model years 2023 through 2026 and leverages advances in clean car technology to result in benefits to Americans ranging from reducing climate pollution, to improving public health, to saving drivers money through reduced fuel and maintenance costs. The standards would phase in over model years 2027 through 2032.

3.7.2.2 State

Given the wide range of GHG-related policies enacted by the State of California, the statewide GHG emissions regulatory framework is summarized below by category: state climate change targets, renewable energy and energy procurement, mobile sources, solid waste, water, and other state regulations and goals. Refer to Section 3.5, *Energy*, for discussion of regulations related to building energy. The following describes executive orders (EOs), legislation, regulations, and other plans and policies that would directly or indirectly reduce GHG emissions and/or address climate change issues.

State Climate Change Targets

Executive Order S-3-05

On June 1, 2005, EO S-3-05 proclaimed that California is vulnerable to climate change impacts. It declared that increased temperatures could reduce snowpack in the Sierra Nevada mountain range, further exacerbate California's air quality problems, and potentially cause a rise in sea levels. To avoid or reduce climate change impacts, EO S-3-05 calls for a reduction in GHG emissions to year 2000 levels by 2010, to year 1990 levels by 2020, and to 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. EOs are not laws and can only provide the governor's direction to state agencies to act within their authority. Therefore, legislation is required to enact the goals of EO S-3-05 and establish frameworks for statewide implementation. AB 32, described below, mandated the 2020 GHG emissions reduction goal of EO S-3-05. The 2050 GHG emissions reduction goal of EO S-3-05 has not been enacted by any legislation and remains only a goal of the EO.

Assembly Bill 32 – Global Warming Solution Act of 2006

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32 and Health and Safety Code Sections 38500, 38501, 28510, 38530, 38550, 38560, 38561-38565, 38570, 38571, 38574, 38580, 38590, 38592-38599), widely known as AB 32, requires that CARB develop and enforce regulations for the reporting and verification of statewide GHG emissions. CARB is directed to set a GHG emission limit, based on 1990 levels, to be achieved by 2020. The bill requires CARB to adopt rules and regulations in an open public process to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective GHG emission reductions. AB 32 enacted the year 2020 GHG emission goals of EO S-3-05.

Executive Order B-30-15

On April 29, 2015, EO B-30-15 established a California GHG emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. The EO aligns California's GHG emission reduction targets with those of leading international governments, including the 28-nation European Union. The emission reduction target of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 will make it possible to reach the goal established by EO

S-3-05 of reducing emissions 80 percent under 1990 levels by 2050. Senate Bill (SB) 32, described below, mandates the 2030 GHG emission reduction goals of EO B-30-15.

Senate Bill 32

SB 32 (Amendments to the California Global Warming Solutions Action of 2006) extends California's GHG reduction programs beyond 2020. SB 32 amended the Health and Safety Code to include Section 38566, which contains language to authorize CARB to achieve a statewide GHG emission reduction of at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by no later than December 31, 2030. SB 32 codified the targets established by EO B-30-15 for 2030, which set the next interim step in the state's continuing efforts to pursue the long-term target expressed in EO B-30-15 of 80 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2050.

Assembly Bill 1279

Approved by Governor Newsom on September 16, 2022, AB 1279, *The California Climate Crisis Act*, declares it the policy of the state to achieve net zero GHG emissions as soon as possible, but no later than 2045, and achieve and maintain net negative GHG emissions thereafter, and to ensure that by 2045, statewide anthropogenic GHG emissions are reduced to at least 85 percent below 1990 levels. AB 1279 anticipates achieving these policies through direct GHG emissions reductions, removal of CO_2 from the atmosphere (carbon capture), and almost complete transition away from fossil fuels.

Senate Bill 905

SB 905, *Carbon sequestration: Carbon Capture, Removal, Utilization, and Storage Program*, also approved by Governor Newsom on September 16, 2022, requires CARB to establish a Carbon Capture, Removal, Utilization, and Storage Program to evaluate the efficacy, safety, and viability of carbon capture, utilization, or storage technologies and CO_2 removal technologies and facilitate the capture and sequestration of CO_2 from those technologies, where appropriate. SB 905 is an integral part of achieving the state policies mandated in AB 1279.

California Air Resources Board Scoping Plan

The Scoping Plan is a strategy CARB develops and updates at least once every five years, as required by AB 32. It lays out the transformations needed across society and the economy to reduce emissions and reach established climate targets. The current 2022 Scoping Plan is the third update to the original plan that was adopted in 2008. The initial 2008 Scoping Plan laid out a path to achieve the AB 32 mandate of returning to 1990 levels of GHG emissions by 2020, a reduction of approximately 15 percent below a business-as-usual scenario. The 2008 Scoping Plan included a mix of incentives, regulations, and carbon pricing, laying out the portfolio approach to addressing climate change and clearly making the case for using multiple tools to meet California's GHG emissions targets. The 2013 Scoping Plan assessed progress toward achieving the 2020 mandate and made the case for addressing short-lived climate pollutants. The 2017 Scoping Plan also assessed progress toward achieving the 2020 limit and provided a technologically feasible and cost-effective path to achieving the SB 32 mandate of reducing GHGs by at least 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

On December 15, 2022, CARB approved the 2022 Scoping Plan for Achieving Carbon Neutrality (2022 Scoping Plan). The 2022 Scoping Plan lays out a path to achieve targets for carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045, as directed by AB

1279. The actions and outcomes in the plan would achieve significant reductions in fossil fuel combustion by deploying clean technologies and fuels; further reductions in short-lived climate pollutants; support for sustainable development; increased action on natural and working lands to reduce emissions and sequester carbon; and the capture and storage of carbon (CARB 2022).

Renewable Energy and Energy Procurement

Senate Bill 1078

SB 1078 (Sher) (September 2002) established the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) program, which required an annual increase in renewable energy generation by the utilities equivalent to at least 1 percent of sales, with an aggregate goal of 20 percent by 2017. This goal was subsequently revised as described below.

Senate Bill 1368

SB 1368 (September 2006) required the California Energy Commission (CEC) to develop and adopt regulations for GHG emission performance standards for the long-term procurement of electricity by local, publicly owned utilities. These standards must be consistent with the standards adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

Executive Order S-14-08

EO S-14-08 (November 2008) focused on the contribution of renewable energy sources to meet the electrical needs of California while reducing the GHG emissions from the electrical sector. This EO required that all retail suppliers of electricity in California serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020. Furthermore, the EO directed state agencies to take appropriate actions to facilitate reaching this target. The California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA), through collaboration with the CEC and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW; formerly the California Department of Fish and Game), was directed to lead this effort.

Executive Order S-21-09 and Senate Bill X1-2

EO S-21-09 (September 2009) directed CARB to adopt a regulation consistent with the goal of EO S-14-08 by July 31, 2010. CARB was further directed to work with the CPUC and CEC to ensure that the regulation builds upon the RPS program and was applicable to investor-owned utilities, publicly owned utilities, direct access providers, and community choice providers. Under this order, CARB was to give the highest priority to those renewable resources that provide the greatest environmental benefits with the least environmental costs or impacts on public health and can be developed the most quickly in support of reliable, efficient, cost-effective electricity system operations. On September 23, 2010, CARB initially approved regulations to implement a Renewable Electricity Standard. However, this regulation was not finalized because of subsequent legislation (SB X1-2, Simitian, statutes of 2011) signed by Governor Brown in April 2011.

SB X1-2 expanded the RPS by establishing a renewable energy target for the total electricity sold to retail customers in California per year of 20 percent by December 31, 2013, and 33 percent by December 31, 2020, and in subsequent years. Under the bill, a renewable electrical generation facility is one that uses biomass, solar thermal, photovoltaic, wind, geothermal, fuel cells using renewable fuels, small hydroelectric generation (30 megawatts [MWs] or less), digester gas, municipal solid waste conversion,

landfill gas, ocean wave, ocean thermal, or tidal current, and that meets other specified requirements with respect to its location.

SB X1-2 applies to all electricity retailers in the state, including publicly owned utilities, investor-owned utilities, electricity service providers, and community choice aggregators. All of these entities must meet the renewable energy goals previously listed.

Senate Bill 350

SB 350 (October 2015, Clean Energy and Pollution Reduction Act) further expanded the RPS by establishing a goal of 50 percent of the total electricity sold to retail customers in California per year being from renewable sources by December 31, 2030. In addition, SB 350 included the goal to double the energy efficiency savings in electricity and natural gas final end uses (e.g., heating, cooling, lighting, or class of energy uses on which an energy-efficiency program is focused) of retail customers through energy conservation and efficiency. The bill also requires the CPUC, in consultation with the CEC, to establish efficiency targets for electrical and gas corporations consistent with this goal. Regarding mobile sources, SB 350 establishes California Public Utilities Code Section 740.12, which involves a statewide policy for widespread electrification of the transportation sector, recognizing that such electrification is required for the achievement of the state's 2030 and 2050 GHG emission reduction targets.

Senate Bill 100

SB 100 (2018) increased the renewable energy standards set forth in SB 350, establishing that of the total electricity sold to retail customers in California per year, 44 percent by December 31, 2024, 52 percent by December 31, 2027, and 60 percent by December 31, 2030, be secured from qualifying renewable energy sources. SB 100 states that it is the policy of the state that eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources supply 100 percent of the retail sales of electricity to California by 2045. This bill also requires that the achievement of 100 percent zero-carbon electricity resources does not increase carbon emissions elsewhere in the western grid and that the achievement does not occur through resource shuffling.

Senate Bill 1020

SB 1020 (September 2022) revises the standards from SB 100, requiring the following percentage of retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers to come from eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources:90 percent by December 31, 2035; 95 percent by December 31, 2040; and 100 percent by December 31, 2045.

Mobile Sources

Assembly Bill 1493 and Advanced Clean Cars

AB 1493 (Pavley) requires that CARB develop and adopt regulations that achieve "the maximum feasible reduction of GHGs emitted by passenger vehicles and light-duty truck and other vehicles determined by CARB to be vehicles whose primary use is noncommercial personal transportation in the State." On September 24, 2009, CARB adopted amendments to the Pavley regulations that intended to reduce GHG emissions in new passenger vehicles from 2009 through 2016. The amendments bind California's enforcement of AB 1493 (starting in 2009), while providing vehicle manufacturers with new compliance

flexibility. The amendments also prepared California to merge its rules with the federal CAFE rules for passenger vehicles (CARB 2026b).

In January 2012, CARB approved Advanced Clean Cars I, a new emissions-control program for model years 2017 through 2025 including low emissions vehicle and zero-emissions vehicle criteria. The Advanced Clean Cars II regulations were adopted in 2022, imposing the next level of low-emission and zero-emission vehicle standards for model years 2026 through 2035 that contribute to meeting federal ambient air quality ozone standards and California's carbon neutrality targets.

On May 22, 2025, the U.S. Congress voted to eliminate the USEPA waivers for California's Advanced Clean Trucks and Heavy-Duty Omnibus regulations. Similarly, on June 12, 2025, President Donald Trump signed a Congressional Review Act resolution to revoke CARB's waivers for Advanced Clean Cars II. Immediately after President Trump signed the resolutions, California's Attorney General Rob Bonta, along with Governor Gavin Newsom and a coalition of 10 other states, sued the Trump administration. The lawsuit is still pending. Governor Newsom also signed EO N-27-25, calling on CARB to develop an Advanced Clean Cars III regulation if the federal disapproval of the Advanced Clean Cars II, Advanced Clean Trucks, and Heavy-Duty Omnibus regulations is not invalidated in court.

Executive Order S-01-07

EO S-01-07, signed by Governor Schwarzenegger on January 18, 2007, directed that a statewide goal be established to reduce the carbon intensity of California's transportation fuels by at least 10 percent by the year 2020. It ordered a Low Carbon Fuel Standard (LCFS) for transportation fuels to be established for California and directed CARB to determine whether a LCFS could be adopted as a discrete early action measure pursuant to AB 32. CARB approved the LCFS as a discrete early action item with a regulation adopted and implemented in April 2010. Although challenged in 2011, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the District Court's opinion and rejected arguments that implementing an LCFS violates the interstate commerce clause in September 2013. CARB, therefore, is continuing to implement the LCFS statewide.

Senate Bill 375

SB 375, the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008, supports the state's climate action goals to reduce GHG emissions through coordinated transportation and land use planning with the goal of more sustainable communities. Under the Sustainable Communities Act, CARB sets regional targets for GHG emissions reductions from passenger vehicle use. In 2010, CARB established these targets for 2020 and 2035 for each region covered by one of the state's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). CARB periodically reviews and updates the targets, as needed.

Each of California's MPOs must prepare a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) as an integral part of its Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The SCS contains land use, housing, and transportation strategies that, if implemented, would allow the region to meet its GHG emission reduction targets. Once adopted by the MPO, the RTP/SCS guides the transportation policies and investments for the region. CARB must review the adopted SCS to confirm and accept the MPO's determination that the SCS, if implemented, would meet the regional GHG targets. If the combination of measures in the SCS would not meet the regional targets, the MPO must prepare a separate alternative planning strategy to meet the targets. The alternative planning strategy is not a part of the RTP. Qualified projects consistent with an approved SCS or alternative planning strategy categorized as "transit priority projects" receive incentives to streamline CEQA processing.

Executive Order N-79-20

EO N-79-20, signed by Governor Newsom on September 23, 2020, establishes three goals for the implementation of zero emissions vehicles in California: first, 100 percent of in-state sales of new passenger cars and trucks will be zero-emissions by 2035; second, 100 percent of medium- and heavy-duty vehicles in the state will be zero-emissions vehicles by 2045 for all operations where feasible, and by 2035 for drayage trucks; and third, 100 percent of off-road vehicles and equipment will be zero emissions by 2035 where feasible.

Solid Waste

Assembly Bill 939

In 1989, AB 939, known as the Integrated Waste Management Act (California Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 40000 et seq.), was passed because of the increase in waste stream and the decrease in landfill capacity. The statute established the California Integrated Waste Management Board to oversee a disposal reporting system. AB 939 mandated a reduction of waste being disposed where jurisdictions were required to meet diversion goals of 25 percent by 1995 and 50 percent by the year 2000 for all solid waste through source reduction, recycling, and composting activities.

Assembly Bill 341

The state legislature enacted AB 341 (California PRC Section 42649.2), amending the Integrated Waste Management Act to include a provision declaring that it is the policy goal of the state that no less than 75 percent of solid waste generated be source-reduced, recycled, or composted by the year 2020, and annually thereafter. In addition, AB 341 required the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) to develop strategies to achieve the state's policy goal. CalRecycle conducted several general stakeholder workshops and several focused workshops. In August 2015, CalRecycle published a discussion document titled *AB 341 Report to the Legislature*, which identified five priority strategies that CalRecycle believed would assist the state in reaching the 75 percent goal by 2020, legislative and regulatory recommendations, and an evaluation of program effectiveness (CalRecycle 2019).

Assembly Bill 1826

AB 1826 (Chapter 727, Statutes of 2014, effective 2016) requires businesses to recycle their organic waste (i.e., food waste, green waste, landscape, and pruning waste, nonhazardous wood waste, and food-soiled paper waste that is mixed in with food waste) depending on the amount of waste they generate per week. This law also requires local jurisdictions across the state to implement an organic waste recycling program to divert organic waste generated by businesses, including multifamily residential dwellings that consist of five or more units. The minimum threshold of organic waste generation by businesses decreases over time, which means an increasingly greater proportion of the commercial sector will be required to comply.

Senate Bill 1383

SB 1383 (Chapter 395, Statutes of 2016) established targets to achieve a 50 percent reduction in the statewide disposal of organic waste from the 2014 level by 2020 and a 75 percent reduction from the 2014 level by 2025. CalRecycle was granted the regulatory authority required to achieve the organic

waste disposal reduction targets and established an additional target that not less than 20 percent of currently disposed edible food is recovered for human consumption by 2025 (CalRecycle 2019).

Water

Executive Order B-29-15

In response to an ongoing drought in California, EO B-29-15 (April 2015) set a goal of achieving a statewide reduction in potable urban water usage of 25 percent relative to water use in 2013. The term of the EO extended through February 28, 2016, although many of the directives have become permanent water-efficiency standards and requirements. The EO includes specific directives that set strict limits on water usage in the state. In response to EO B-29-15, the California Department of Water Resources modified and adopted a revised version of the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance that, among other changes, significantly increased the requirements for landscape water use efficiency and broadened its applicability to include new development projects with smaller landscape areas.

Executive Order B-37-16

Issued in May 2016, EO B-37-16 directed the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) to adjust emergency water conservation regulations through the end of January 2017 to reflect differing water supply conditions across the state. The SWRCB also developed a proposal to achieve a mandatory reduction of potable urban water usage that built off the mandatory 25 percent reduction called for in EO B-29-15. The SWRCB and Department of Water Resources were required to develop new, permanent water use targets that built upon the existing state law requirements to achieve 20 percent reduction in urban water usage by 2020. EO B-37-16 also specifies that the SWRCB permanently prohibit water-wasting practices such as hosing off sidewalks, driveways, and other hardscapes; washing automobiles with hoses not equipped with a shut-off nozzle; using non-recirculated water in a fountain or other decorative water feature; watering lawns in a manner that causes runoff, or within 48 hours after measurable precipitation; and irrigating ornamental turf on public street medians.

Executive Order N-10-21

In response to a state of emergency due to severe drought conditions, EO N-10-21 (July 2021) called on all Californians to voluntarily reduce their water use by 15 percent from their 2020 levels. Actions suggested in EO N-10-21 include reducing landscape irrigation, running dishwashers and washing machines only when full, finding and fixing leaks, installing water-efficient showerheads, taking shorter showers, using a shut-off nozzle on hoses, and taking cars to commercial car washes that use recycled water.

Other State Actions

Senate Bill 97

SB 97 (Dutton) (August 2007) directed the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR; now named the Governor's Office of Land Use & Climate Innovation) to develop guidelines under CEQA for the mitigation of GHG emissions. In 2008, OPR issued a technical advisory as interim guidance regarding the analysis of GHG emissions in CEQA documents. The advisory indicated that the lead agency should identify and estimate a project's GHG emissions, including those associated with vehicular traffic, energy consumption, water usage, and construction activities (OPR 2008). The advisory further recommended

that the lead agency determine the significance of the impacts and impose all mitigation measures necessary to reduce GHG emissions to a level that is less than significant. The CNRA adopted the CEQA Guidelines amendments in December 2009, which became effective in March 2010.

Under the amended CEQA Guidelines, a lead agency has the discretion to determine whether to use a quantitative or qualitative analysis or apply performance standards to determine the significance of GHG emissions resulting from a particular project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4[a]). The CEQA Guidelines require a lead agency to consider the extent to which a project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4[b]). The CEQA Guidelines also allow a lead agency to consider feasible means of mitigating the significant effects of GHG emissions, including reductions in emissions through the implementation of project features or off-site measures. The adopted amendments do not establish a GHG emission threshold, instead allowing a lead agency to develop, adopt, and apply its own thresholds of significance or those developed by other agencies or experts. The CNRA also acknowledges that a lead agency may consider compliance with regulations or requirements implementing AB 32 in determining the significance of a project's GHG emissions (CNRA 2009).

With respect to GHG emissions, the CEQA Guidelines state in Section 15064.4(a) that lead agencies should "make a good faith effort, to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe, calculate or estimate" GHG emissions. The CEQA Guidelines note that an agency may identify emissions by either selecting a "model or methodology" to quantify the emissions or by relying on "qualitative analysis or other performance-based standards" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4[a]). Section 15064.4(b) states that the lead agency should consider the following when assessing the significance of impacts from GHG emissions on the environment: (1) the extent a project may increase or reduce GHG emissions as compared to the existing environmental setting; (2) whether the project emissions exceed a threshold of significance that the lead agency determines applies to the project; and (3) the extent to which the project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4[b]).

3.7.2.3 Regional

San Diego Association of Government's Regional Plan

The San Diego Association of Government's (SANDAG's) 2025 Regional Plan (Regional Plan; SANDAG 2025) combines the RTP, SCS, and Regional Comprehensive Plan. As such, the Regional Plan must comply with specific state and federal mandates. These include an SCS, per SB 375, that achieves GHG emissions reduction targets set by CARB; compliance with federal civil rights requirements (Title VI); environmental justice considerations; air quality conformity; and public participation.

3.7.2.4 District

California Community Colleges Board of Governors Climate Action and Sustainability Framework

The California Community Colleges Board of Governors' Climate Action and Sustainability Framework (California Community Colleges 2025) is a comprehensive systemwide plan that builds on the 2019 Climate Change and Sustainability Policy to guide all 116 colleges in the California Community Colleges system toward measurable environmental, social, and educational progress. It calls on community

college districts throughout the state to set benchmarks and track their advancement toward 2025, 2030, and 2035 goals. The framework focuses on reducing GHG emissions, integrating sustainability into campus operations, and expanding climate-focused curriculum and workforce development.

San Diego Community College District Climate Action Plan

The District's 2023 Climate Action Plan (CAP; District 2023) establishes a 2022 District GHG inventory, which determined that the District's carbon footprint was 62,325 MT CO_2e per year. The main source of these emissions was commuter mobile sources (commuter trips to campus by staff, faculty, and students), which accounted for 73.35 percent of the District's GHG emissions. This was followed by lesser emissions associated with natural gas used in fuel cells, natural gas used for space and water heating, and purchased electricity. The District CAP additionally includes various recommendations for next steps but does not make commitments regarding GHG emission reductions or specific implementation actions. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5, the District CAP is not a CEQA-qualified CAP and therefore cannot be used for streamlining GHG analyses for future District development projects.

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Sustainability & Climate Strategy

Section 1.3, *Sustainability & Climate Strategy*, of the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes the Climate Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, Green Policies, and Sustainability Levels. Related to GHG emissions, this includes Materials Impact Goal 2, which outlines the District goal of providing a healthy environment that does not abuse material resources and improves health, with a key performance indicator of maintaining optimal CO_2 levels through the use of materials that are low-carbon, recycled, or responsibly sourced. The Sustainability Levels framework included in this section is further described below.

Sustainability Levels

The District's Sustainability Levels are designed to recognize, measure, and promote sustainable practices across District campuses and facilities. They provide a tiered rating system that encourages environmentally responsible design, construction, and operations. All District capital projects, including new construction, major renovations, and modernization, are required to incorporate the principles outlined in the District Sustainability Levels and meet applicable local, state, and District-adopted sustainability policies. District-adopted sustainability standards include the following:

1. Each campus shall facilitate and maintain an ongoing waste recycling program that establishes where facilities on campus will handle recycled materials including paper, cardboard, glass, plastics, and metal.
2. Renewable woods shall be specified and detailed.
3. The designer shall specify the Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Plus Program. All carpet cushion installed in the building shall have low emitting materials and backing.
4. The District's Facilities Services have adopted a program of Green cleaning materials and techniques.

The District's Sustainability Levels include categories with specific requirements that each have an assigned point value. The categories include project design, climate resilience, energy and carbon performance, water conservation and management, materials and waste, indoor environmental quality and wellness, community engagement and learning, and innovation. A scorecard is filled out based on the requirements the project achieves, which determines the sustainability level for the project from the following:

- Baseline/ Sagebrush (Baseline Sustainability) – Meets the District's minimum sustainability standards, with basic energy and water conservation measures.
- Certified/ Coast Live Oak (Sustainable Performance) – Demonstrates significant sustainable strategies.
- Silver/ Torrey Pine (High-Performance Green Building) – Meets advanced sustainable quality benchmarks.
- Gold/ Redwood (Leadership in Sustainability) – Implements innovative sustainability strategies.
- Platinum/ Sequoia (Exemplar of Sustainability) – Sets model for sustainable education facilities.

All final programming documents must contain a section related to sustainability. The conceptual design for new building projects must have sustainable features that achieve the Certified/Coastal Live Oak level at a minimum. Conceptual design schemes for major renovation projects should have sustainable features and may be required to achieve a Certified/Coastal Live Oak level; however, this is determined on a case-by-case basis based on the feasibility of incorporating such features into a renovation project.

District Board Policies and Administrative Procedures

Board Policy 6970: Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards. The Board of Trustees has established a Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards to provide District students, faculty and staff with working and learning environments that are healthy, thermally, visually and acoustically comfortable; energy efficient; material efficient; water efficient; easy to maintain and operate; safe and secure and sited in an environmentally responsible manner. In accordance with this Board Policy, the District will select architects, engineers, and other professionals who have demonstrated expertise in sustainable design and are Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) accredited as deemed appropriate as well as encourage District personnel to become familiar with these standards.

Administrative Procedure 6970: Green Buildings. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance for implementing District policies and standards for the design and construction of green buildings and renovations. Efficient energy use and efficiently designed buildings are central to resource sustainability efforts of the District, City, and state. Energy conservation in building design 1) reduces the operating costs of the District, 2) reduces the carbon footprint of the District, and 3) provides environmental education. This Administrative Procedure goes on to outline criteria for new buildings including, but not limited to, outperforming Title 24 energy efficiency standards by at least 20 percent, striving to achieve a LEED-NC gold rating, and requiring that at least 5 percent of a project's total energy is generated on site from renewable sources.

3.7.2.5 Local (Non-Regulatory)

The District is not subject to local zoning or land use planning documents, including the City of San Diego's 2022 CAP and associated implementing regulations. However, as the Mesa College campus is within the City, a summary of the City's CAP strategy is provided below for informational purposes.

City of San Diego Climate Action Plan

On August 2, 2022, the San Diego City Council adopted the 2022 CAP update to establish a community-wide goal and roadmap to net-zero emissions by 2035. The 2022 CAP includes the following six strategies: decarbonization of the built environment, access to clean and renewable energy, mobility and land use, circular economy and clean communities, resilient infrastructure and healthy ecosystems, and emerging climate actions (City 2022). The City is in the process of preparing a Climate Action Plan Update to maintain alignment with state targets and goals for reducing emissions, which is anticipated to be complete in 2027.

As proposed in the 2022 CAP, in October 2022, the City Council approved an amendment to the Land Development Code (San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 14), which established the CAP Consistency Regulations. The CAP Consistency Regulations replaced the CAP Consistency Checklist previously established by the City's 2015 CAP as the measures that could be implemented on a project-by-project basis to streamline evaluation of GHG emissions under CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183.5(b)(1)(D). Implementation of these measures would ensure that new development projects are consistent with relevant CAP strategies that work toward achieving the identified GHG reduction targets. Projects that are consistent with the CAP as determined through compliance with the CAP Consistency Regulations may rely on the CAP for the cumulative impact analysis of GHG emissions.

3.7.3 Thresholds of Significance

Given the relatively small levels of GHG emissions generated by a typical development in relation to the total amount of GHG emissions generated on a national or global basis, individual development projects are not expected to result in significant, direct impacts to climate change. However, given the magnitude of the impact of GHG emissions on the global climate, GHG emissions from new development could result in significant, cumulative impacts with respect to climate change. Therefore, the potential for a significant GHG emissions impact is limited to cumulative impacts.

Thresholds used to evaluate potential GHG emissions impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant GHG emissions impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment; or

2. Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

The determination of significance for GHG emissions is governed by CEQA Guidelines 15064.4, titled "Determining the Significance of Impacts from Greenhouse Gas Emissions." CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(a) states, "[t]he determination of the significance of greenhouse gas emissions calls for a careful judgment by the lead agency consistent with the provisions in Section 15064. A lead agency should make a good-faith effort, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe,

calculate, or estimate the amount of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from a project. A lead agency shall have discretion to determine, in the context of a particular project, whether to … [use a quantitative model or qualitative model].” CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4(b) clarifies that a lead agency should consider the following factors when determining the significance of impacts from GHG emissions:

1. The extent to which a project may increase or reduce GHG emissions as compared to the existing environmental setting.

2. Whether project emissions exceed a threshold of significance that the lead agency determines applies to a project.

3. The extent to which a project complies with regulations or requirements adopted to implement a statewide, regional, or local plan for the reduction or mitigation of GHG emissions.

Therefore, consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4, the GHG emissions analysis for the CMP relies upon a threshold based on the exercise of careful judgment and believed to be appropriate in the context of the project.

Neither the State of California, the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (SDAPCD), nor the District has adopted a quantitative emission-based threshold to determine significance for GHG emissions associated with campus development under CEQA. In the absence of an adopted numeric threshold, the significance of GHG emissions for the project is evaluated based on consistency with statewide goals for the reduction of GHG emissions as outlined in the 2022 Scoping Plan. As the California Supreme Court held in *Center for Biological Diversity v. Department of Fish & Wildlife* (2015) (62 Cal. 4th 204), the evaluation of a project based on its effect on California’s efforts to meet long-term climate goals is an appropriate significance criterion under CEQA. A project that would be consistent with meeting those goals can be found to have a less than significant impact on climate change under CEQA. If a project would contribute its “fair share” of what would be required to achieve those long-term climate goals, then a reviewing agency can find that the impact would not be significant because the project would help to solve the problem of global climate change (62 Cal. 4th 220-223).

As discussed further in Section 3.7.2.2, the 2022 Scoping Plan lays out a path to achieve targets for carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045, as directed by AB 1279. Appendix D to the 2022 Scoping Plan specifically includes recommendations for local government actions that align with the state’s climate goals, with a focus on local GHG reduction strategies and approval of new land use development. Project consistency with these locally recommended strategies would demonstrate that proposed development is in alignment with state goals and incorporates the design features necessary to contribute its fair share to the state’s goal of carbon neutrality by 2045. Therefore, if the project complies with the local strategy recommendations, it can be found to contribute its “fair share” to achieve the state’s long-term climate goals and have a less than significant GHG emissions impact.

3.7.4 Impact Analysis

3.7.4.1 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Threshold 1: Would the project generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Project-Generated Emissions

CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4 states, "[a] lead agency should make a good-faith effort, based to the extent possible on scientific and factual data, to describe, calculate, or estimate the amount of GHG emissions resulting from a project." While project GHG emissions impacts are based on implementation of 2022 Scoping Plan strategies as described in Section 3.7.3 above, the following discussion presents an estimate of the GHG emissions generated by project construction for informational purposes.

GHG emissions associated with the CMP were calculated using CalEEMod, Version 2022.1, as further described in Section 3.2.4.2 for construction, mobile, area, natural gas, and stationary sources. For the assessment of GHG emissions, the model inputs also account for electricity use, water use and wastewater generation, solid waste disposal, and refrigerants. Electricity and water demand for future development were based on existing usage rates per square foot in campus buildings. Wastewater, solid waste, and refrigerant source emissions were modeled based on CalEEMod defaults. The modeling inputs are explained further in Section 4.1 of Appendix B to the PEIR.

Construction Emissions

The GHG emissions associated with construction of the CMP are quantified for the near-term projects and presented in the project-level analysis below. These near-term projects would consist of similar construction phases, utilize similar construction equipment, and be similar in scale and construction intensity to future projects; therefore, their quantified GHG emissions are generally reflective of the additional projects which would be implemented under the CMP in the future. During concurrent construction of the two near-term projects, the year with the highest GHG emissions would be 2029, with 968.3 MT CO_2e produced from construction. Construction activity would vary by year throughout implementation of the CMP but can be anticipated to result in similar GHG emissions as anticipated on an annual basis for the near-term projects. This is a relatively conservative scenario for concurrent construction activity that may occur within a single year for construction of the remaining CMP projects.

Operational Emissions

GHG emissions associated with buildout of the CMP were estimated using CalEEMod and compared with GHG emissions from existing campus operations (refer to Table 3.7-3). For informational purposes, the total annual and net new GHG emissions for the CMP buildout year of 2045 are shown in Table 3.7-4, *Operational GHG Emissions*. Appendix C, *CMP Full Buildout CalEEMod Output*, of Appendix B to the PEIR contains the CalEEMod output files.

Table 3.7-4
OPERATIONAL GHG EMISSIONS

Emission Sources	2045 Emissions (MT CO_2e)
Vehicular (Mobile)	12,132.6
Area	35.8
Energy	4,156.7
Water/Wastewater	40.1
Solid Waste	813.4
Refrigerants	1.1
Stationary	18.0
Campus Total[1]	**17,197.7**
Existing Campus GHG Emissions (Table 3.7-3)	*13,902.9*
Net New CMP GHG Emissions	**3,294.8**

Source: HELIX 2026
[1] Totals may not sum due to rounding.
GHG = greenhouse gas; MT = metric tons; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

Although operational emissions would increase with CMP buildout, the increase reflects intensified educational use and campus programming and is reduced by design through building electrification, improvements in transportation efficiency, and consistency with state decarbonization strategies.

Scoping Plan Consistency Analysis

The Scoping Plan (approved by CARB in 2008 and updated in 2014, 2017, and 2022) provides a framework to reduce California's GHG emissions in accordance with AB 32. The 2022 Scoping Plan identified additional GHG reduction measures necessary to achieve targets for carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045 in accordance with goals set in AB 1279. The Scoping Plan requires CARB and other state agencies to adopt regulations and other strategies to reduce GHGs. As many of the strategies identified in the Scoping Plan are not directly applicable to specific projects, the 2022 Scoping Plan included Appendix D providing recommendations and clarification on local GHG-reduction strategies and project-level environmental review. As described in Section 3.7.3, consistency with the 2022 Scoping Plan was determined to be an appropriate methodology for assessment of project GHG emissions impact significance as implementation of these strategies would represent the project's "fair share" contribution to meeting state GHG reduction targets.

Table 1 of Appendix D of the 2022 Scoping Plan provides impactful GHG reduction strategies that can be implemented by local governments that address the three local priority areas: (1) transportation electrification, (2) VMT reduction, and (3) building electrification. These areas and strategies are designated as "priority" because they are the GHG reduction opportunities over which local governments have the most authority and that have the highest GHG reduction potential. The project's consistency with these strategies is provided in Table 3.7-5, *Scoping Plan Consistency Analysis*.

Table 3.7-5
SCOPING PLAN CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS

2022 Scoping Plan Priority Areas	2022 Scoping Plan Priority GHG Reduction Strategies	Project Consistency Statement
Transportation Electrification	Convert local government fleets to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and provide EV charging at public sites	**Consistent.** EV charging stations are currently available to Mesa College students, staff, visitors, and the general public in the PS1 parking structure. The CMP parking improvements would additionally include new EV charging stations on campus, though parking at EV chargers is regulated consistent with campus parking requirements. Further, the District is currently purchasing ZEVs for maintenance and facilities staff as the fleet requires replacement, and development of the CMP would not conflict with policies regarding the conversion of fleets to ZEVs.
	Create a jurisdiction-specific ZEV ecosystem to support deployment of ZEVs statewide (such as building standards that exceed state building codes, permit streamlining, infrastructure siting, consumer education, preferential parking policies, and ZEV readiness plans)	**Consistent.** The CMP would not inhibit the implementation of any actions to support statewide ZEV deployment. The District is currently in the process of purchasing ZEVs for maintenance and facilities staff.
VMT Reduction	Reduce or eliminate minimum parking standards	**Consistent.** The District does not have minimum parking standards for its campuses. Although the CMP would include new parking facilities, these improvements would accommodate anticipated student growth and would not result in increased VMT due to the provision of excessive parking (refer to discussion of parking pricing below).
	Implement Complete Streets policies and investments, consistent with general plan circulation element requirements	**Consistent.** Although the District is not subject to municipal regulations or plans such as the City's Complete Streets Policy or General Plan Circulation Element, the CMP would not impede implementation of these policies or future complete street improvements on City roadways. The CMP would also include elements to improve on-campus circulation and safety through the construction pedestrian connections and bicycle paths.
	Increase access to public transit by increasing density of development near transit, improving transit service by increasing service frequency, creating bus priority lanes, reducing or eliminating fares, microtransit, etc.	**Consistent.** The CMP would increase the density of the Mesa College campus, which is located within an area with easy access to trolley and bus services. The District would continue to provide transit passes for sale at the discounted student rate established by MTS.

2022 Scoping Plan Priority Areas	2022 Scoping Plan Priority GHG Reduction Strategies	Project Consistency Statement
VMT Reduction (cont.)	Increase public access to clean mobility options by planning for and investing in electric shuttles, bike share, car share, and walking	**Consistent.** The CMP would encourage clean mobility options by including improvements such as pedestrian connections, bicycle paths, ride share drop off areas, and bus stops.
	Implement parking pricing or transportation demand management pricing strategies	**Consistent.** Parking within the Mesa College campus requires the purchase of a permit, which would align with pricing strategies to encourage the use of public transit in the area. Carpooling is also encouraged through the discounted carpool parking permit option.
	Amend zoning or development codes to enable mixed-use, walkable, transit-oriented, and compact infill development (such as increasing the allowable density of a neighborhood)	**Consistent.** The CMP would implement higher density infill development projects within the Mesa College campus, which is fully developed with campus uses and surrounded by urban development. Bus stops are also available within campus.
	Preserve natural and working lands by implementing land use policies that guide development toward infill areas and do not convert "greenfield" land to urban uses (e.g., green belts, strategic conservation easements)	**Consistent.** The CMP would implement infill development projects within the boundaries of the Mesa College campus, which is fully developed with campus uses and surrounded by urban development. Therefore, no greenfield conversion would occur.
Building Decarbonization	Adopt all-electric new construction reach codes for residential and commercial uses	**Consistent.** The new buildings constructed under the CMP would be all-electric in accordance with District sustainability policies outlined in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. Construction on campus would be required to comply with Title 24 standards, and projects are further incentivized to reach energy efficiency above the Title 24 baseline as outlined in the District's Sustainability Levels framework. In addition, Administrative Procedure 6970 includes the goals of outperforming Title 24 energy efficiency standards by at least 20 percent, striving to achieve a LEED-NC gold rating, and requiring that at least 5 percent of a project's total energy is generated on site from renewable sources.
	Adopt policies and incentive programs to implement energy efficiency retrofits for existing buildings, such as weatherization, lighting upgrades, and replacing energy-intensive appliances and equipment with more efficient systems (such as Energy Star-rated equipment and equipment controllers)	**Consistent.** The District would continue to implement green building standards in campus facilities in accordance with Board Policy 6970 (Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards) and Administrative Procedure 6970 (Green Buildings) as outlined in Section 3.2.4.2. Administrative Procedure 6970 requires that the renovation of buildings that require 100 percent replacement of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems

2022 Scoping Plan Priority Areas	2022 Scoping Plan Priority GHG Reduction Strategies	Project Consistency Statement
Building Decarbonization (cont.)		and replacement of over 50 percent of all non-shell areas (interior walls, doors, floor coverings, and ceiling systems) would at a minimum achieve LEED Silver or an equivalent certification.
	Adopt policies and incentive programs to electrify all appliances and equipment in existing buildings such as appliance rebates, existing building reach codes, or time of sale electrification ordinances	**Consistent.** The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes policies related to building electrification, including a goal to achieve a 75 percent reduction in natural gas usage by 2035. To reduce natural gas usage, the District builds new facilities with no natural gas connections, except in rare circumstances for specialized equipment, and replaces gas-powered equipment with electric equivalents when replacement is needed.
	Facilitate deployment of renewable energy production and distribution and energy storage on privately owned land uses (e.g., permit streamlining, information sharing)	**Consistent.** The Mesa College campus currently hosts solar panels that generate renewable energy. The District has previously used programs intended to increase renewable energy generation, such as power purchase agreements for solar panels on other campuses. While no specific renewable energy facilities are part of the CMP, the District would continue to evaluate the feasibility of incorporating such technology on campus as it is available and economically feasible.
	Deploy renewable energy production and energy storage directly in new public projects and on existing public facilities (e.g., solar photovoltaic systems on rooftops of municipal buildings and on canopies in public parking lots, battery storage systems in municipal buildings)	**Consistent.** The Mesa College campus currently has an on-site solar thermal system at the Mesa Commons building (Building MC) and solar panels throughout the campus.

Source: CARB 2022

As shown in Table 3.7-5, the CMP would not impede implementation of the GHG reduction strategies identified in the 2022 Scoping Plan. Rather, many of the District and Mesa College policies would be consistent with these GHG reduction strategies. Therefore, buildout of the CMP would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant effect on the environment.

Project-Level

Construction Emissions

GHG emissions would be associated with the construction phases of the near-term projects through the use of off-road heavy equipment and vehicle trips from construction worker, vendor, and haul trips. An inventory of construction GHG emissions estimated using CalEEMod for the near-term projects is provided below for informational purposes. See Appendix B to the PEIR for additional details regarding

model inputs. Table 3.7-6, *Near-Term Construction GHG Emissions by Year*, presents a summary of the total annual GHG emissions associated with the construction of the near-term projects.

Table 3.7-6
NEAR-TERM CONSTRUCTION GHG EMISSIONS BY YEAR

Year	Athletics Complex Emissions (MT CO_2e)	Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure Emissions (MT CO_2e)	Total Annual Emissions (MT CO_2e)
2027	--	411.2	**411.2**
2028	441.4	505.9	**947.3**
2029	406.6	561.7	**968.3**
2030	245.0	118.4	**363.4**
2031	2.6	--	**2.6**
Total Construction Emissions	**1,095.4**	**1,597.2**	--

Source: HELIX 2026
MT = metric tons; CO_2e = carbon dioxide equivalent

Operational Emissions

Operation of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP is accounted for in the GHG emissions calculated for the full buildout of the CMP provided for informational purposes in Table 3.7-4 above and the Scoping Plan consistency analysis contained in Table 3.7-5. The incremental change in GHG emissions as each near-term project becomes operational would be minimal as these projects would replace similar uses with new but expanded facilities that incorporate more stringent energy efficiency standards. As the near-term projects would be consistent with the Scoping Plan, operation of the near-term projects would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant effect on the environment.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

The CMP, including the near-term projects, would not generate GHG emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant effect on the environment. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.7.4.2 Greenhouse Gas Emission Reduction Plans

Threshold 2: Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

There are numerous state plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. Statewide plans and regulations such as GHG emissions standards for vehicles (AB 1493), the LCFS, and regulations requiring an increasing fraction of electricity to be generated from renewable sources are being implemented at the statewide level; as such, compliance at the project level is not

addressed. Impacts of the CMP are evaluated based on whether the project would conflict with or obstruct implementation of CARB's 2022 Scoping Plan or the California Community Colleges Sustainability and Climate Action goals.

California Air Resources Board 2022 Scoping Plan

As discussed in Section 3.7.2.3, the 2022 Scoping Plan lays out a path to achieve targets for carbon neutrality and reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions by 85 percent below 1990 levels no later than 2045, as directed by AB 1279. Appendix D to the 2022 Scoping Plan includes recommendations for local government actions that align with the state's climate goals, with a focus on local GHG reduction strategies for new land use development. As demonstrated in Section 3.7.4.1 above, the project would be consistent with the priority GHG reduction strategies identified in Appendix D of the 2022 Scoping Plan and therefore address the three key priorities identified by the 2022 Scoping Plan for local jurisdictions.

California Community Colleges Board of Governors Climate Action and Sustainability Framework

The California Community College Climate Action and Sustainability Framework provides goals and recommendations for community college districts in response to the Board of Governors Climate Change and Sustainability Policy. The latest version of this framework aligned the California Community Colleges with the 2017 Scoping Plan; therefore, the analysis provided in Section 3.7.4.1 related to the 2022 Scoping Plan demonstrates that the project would be consistent with the more recent state goals and recommendations. Nonetheless, the following describes how District programs and the CMP align with the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework goals, which are intended to be specifically relevant to community colleges.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction

The GHG Emissions Reduction goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework recommend that each campus submits to the Chancellor's Office measurable sustainability objectives, including carbon emissions baselines, carbon emissions inventories, and local CAPs, and then continues to track and report campus GHG emissions. To achieve statewide goals, campuses are then recommended to reduce campus/district GHG emissions (purchases of electricity and natural gas; fleet and marine vessel usage; and other emissions over which the entity has direct control) by at least 75 percent by 2030 and 100 percent by 2035. While emissions from commute sources are outside of a district's control, the community colleges are encouraged to promote the use of alternative transportation and/or alternative fuels to reduce transportation emissions. Lastly, new construction and renovation projects are encouraged to emphasize optimum energy utilization, low life cycle operating costs, and compliance with all applicable energy codes (enhanced Title 24 energy codes) and regulations, including for specialized construction types (e.g., historical buildings) that are not regulated through the current energy codes.

As summarized in Section 3.7.2.4, the District completed its carbon emission baseline inventory and the District CAP in 2023 (District 2023). In addition, as discussed further under Green Buildings below, the District has Board Policies and Administrative Procedures which mandate certain green building techniques to reduce GHG emissions for new construction and renovation projects. In addition, the Sustainability Levels provide incentives for exceeding Title 24 regulations as discussed further under Energy below. All new buildings constructed under the CMP would be all-electric and would therefore reduce emissions from natural gas use and be consistent with the goals outlined above.

Green Buildings

The Green Buildings goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework encourage districts to benchmark energy usage intensity for each building and develop a zero net energy and campus electrification strategy or conduct LEED or WELL assessment of existing buildings. By 2030, it is recommended that new buildings and major renovations are constructed as zero net energy ready, new buildings be certified LEED or WELL Gold, and natural gas use in buildings be reduced by 30 percent. Building on these goals, by 2035 it is recommended that new buildings and major renovations are constructed as zero net energy and certified Zero Carbon, existing buildings are certified LEED Operations and Maintenance Gold or WELL Gold equivalent, and natural gas use in buildings be reduced by 75 percent.

The District Energy and Environmental Plan within the Strategic Energy and Environmental Plan included a LEED assessment of existing District buildings. The District currently implements green building standards in campus facilities in accordance with Board Policy 6970 (Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards) and Administrative Procedure 6970 (Green Buildings) as outlined in Section 3.7.2.4. Board Policy 6970 requires the District to select architects, engineers and other professionals who have demonstrated expertise in sustainable design and are accredited. Administrative Procedure 6970 provides guidance for implementing District policies and standards for the design and construction of green buildings and renovations and outlines criteria for new buildings including, but not limited to, outperforming Title 24 energy efficiency standards by at least 20 percent, striving to achieve a LEED-NC gold rating, and requiring that at least five percent of a project's total energy is generated on site from renewable sources. The District has additionally developed the Sustainability Levels, which provide a tiered rating system that encourages environmentally responsible design, construction, and operations and applies to new construction, major renovations, and modernization projects. See Section 3.7.2.4 for additional details regarding this program. The projects implemented under the CMP would continue to comply with these policies throughout design, construction, and operation of individual projects.

Energy

The Energy goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework state that California's local community colleges should consider establishing a campus Energy Use Intensity (EUI) score, conduct Effective Useful Life analysis of all gas-using appliances and systems, and plan for electrification of systems with Effective Useful Life of less than 10 years. In addition, the Energy goals encourage colleges to decrease EUI by 25 percent compared to the campus benchmark and annually produce or procure 75 percent of on-site electrical consumption using renewable energy by 2030. Lastly, the Energy goals encourage college campuses to decrease EUI by 40 percent compared to the campus benchmark and accomplish Net Zero Energy Campus by 2035.

The District has identified the goal of decreasing energy consumption through metering on-campus buildings, utilizing cool roofs, and utilizing natural daylight for lighting through the installation of skylights. The Strategic Energy and Environmental Plan identifies equipment replacement and energy conservation enhancements to be undertaken for existing buildings to improve their energy efficiency. The Sustainability Levels framework additionally identifies incentives for energy and carbon performance standards, including energy efficiency greater than Title 24 requirements, integration of on-site renewable energy sources and battery storage, and all-electric construction. Further, as stated in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, it is the policy of the District for all projects to be as energy efficient and as space efficient as possible. Future campus projects would continue to

incorporate energy efficiency features into their design and minimize the use of natural gas in support of these goals.

Water

The Water goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework encourage community colleges to manage water more sustainably by using local benchmarks for potable water consumption, identifying non-potable water sources, and adopting best-practice programs such as the California Community College Model Stormwater Management Program. They are additionally encouraged to reduce potable water use by 25 percent through measures such as separately metering large irrigation systems, prioritizing native plants, limiting turf grass, and aligning with Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) requirements by 2030. By 2035, colleges should aim for a 50 percent reduction in potable water use from baseline levels and ensure stormwater runoff and discharge match predevelopment conditions by incorporating green infrastructure and low-impact development across campuses and in new construction.

The District has identified a goal of decreasing water usage on its campuses with supporting actions including separating landscape from domestic water reporting, implementing rainwater capture, using water efficient plumbing fixtures, and planting native and water efficient planting. In addition, the Sustainability Levels establish incentives for District projects to incorporate water conversation measures, including low-flow plumbing fixtures, reduction in potable water use, and utilizing native and/or drought tolerant species for landscaping. The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual further includes the Storm Water Management Requirements section, which states that the District has elected to comply with MS4 requirements. Low impact development (LID) strategies would also be incorporated into site designs to promote stormwater infiltration. Projects implemented under the CMP would incorporate these actions as feasible into their design and would therefore support these goals.

Waste

The Waste goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework encourage districts and community colleges to strengthen their waste-reduction efforts by conducting waste categorization assessments, benchmarking material use, complying with relevant Title 14 regulations, assessing AB 341 compliance, and centralizing waste-reporting systems by 2025. By 2030, they should work toward zero waste to landfills, complete a circularity analysis, and reduce total material consumption by 10 percent. By 2035, they are encouraged to increase material circularity by 25 percent and reduce overall material consumption by 25 percent.

The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes a list of sustainability standards adopted by the District, which states that each campus shall facilitate and maintain an ongoing waste recycling program that establishes where facilities on campus will handle recycled materials including paper, cardboard, glass, plastics, and metal. The Mesa College campus would continue to maintain this program, and implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not impede implementation of this program. In addition, the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual identifies the goal of achieving a minimum “end-of-project” recycling rate of 75 percent for non-hazardous solid waste and a further goal of 90 percent diversion from landfills and incinerators by weight, including both demolition and construction waste. The projects implemented under the CMP would implement these waste reduction goals as feasible to be consistent with the Waste goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework.

Purchasing and Procurement

The Purchasing and Procurement goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework encourage Districts and community colleges to strengthen sustainable purchasing practices by benchmarking the environmental performance of current products and services, adopting sustainable procurement policies, and prioritizing environmentally preferable electronics by 2025. By 2030, they should work to increase their procurement of sustainable goods and services by 25 percent above baseline levels, and by 2035, they are encouraged to expand that progress to a 50 percent increase. In order for the state's community colleges to reach these goals, campuses can promote use of suppliers and/or vendors who reduce waste, re-purpose recycled material, or support other environmentally friendly practices in the provision of goods or services. In order to move to zero waste, campus practices can: (1) encourage use of products that minimize the volume of trash sent to landfills or incinerators; (2) participate in the CalRecycle Buy-Recycled program or equivalent; and (3) increase recycled content purchases in all Buy-Recycled program product categories.

The Sustainability Levels establish incentives for on-campus projects to incorporate sustainability practices into each phase of project implementation. Specifically, the Sustainability Levels identify incentives for implementing sustainable procurement policies and construction waste diversion strategies, and use of at least 30 percent recycled building materials. Individual projects under the CMP would incorporate these sustainability measures as feasible in order to achieve a score that meets the baseline sustainability requirements outlined in the Sustainability Levels section of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. As such, the CMP would implement the Purchasing and Procurement goals during the construction and operation phases of each project consistent with these goals.

Transportation

The Transportation goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework encourage districts and community colleges to improve sustainable transportation by assessing the condition and electrification potential of their fleet vehicles, expanding EV-charging infrastructure, promoting shared and accessible transportation options, and enhancing pedestrian and bicycle access by 2025. By 2030, they should aim for half of all new fleet vehicles and rolling stock to be zero-emission and may consider green parking permits. By 2035, they are encouraged to transition fully so that 100 percent of new fleet vehicles and rolling stock are zero-emission, supporting a long-term shift toward cleaner campus mobility.

The Mesa College campus is accessible from high-quality public transit options accessible via existing pedestrian infrastructure. The use of shared or public transportation is encouraged through the requirement to pay for on-campus parking, with a discounted option for carpool permits. The long-term projects under the CMP that include parking would expand EV-charging infrastructure through the installation of EV-charging stations at new parking facilities at the Mesa College campus. In addition, projects planned under the CMP would include pedestrian connections, bicycle paths, ride share drop off areas, and bus stops. The District also anticipates continuing to electrify its vehicle fleet as existing vehicles require replacement.

Food Systems

The Food Systems goals of the Climate Action and Sustainability Framework encourage Districts and colleges to improve the sustainability of their food systems by having food service providers track and report sustainable food purchases using the Real Food Challenge guidelines or an equivalent framework. By 2030, they should work toward ensuring that 20 percent of their total food budget goes to

sustainable options, and by 2035, aim for 80 percent of all food served on campus to meet Real Food Challenge standards or similar criteria, strengthening long-term commitments to ethical, healthy, and environmentally responsible dining.

Implementation of the CMP would not prevent implementation of the practices and policies related to food systems that the District is implementing or preparing to implement at its campuses, including Mesa College. In addition, projects implemented under the CMP that include dining facilities would be required to implement the specific sustainable food procurement policies outlined in the Food Systems goals above as they are implemented by the District.

Project-Level

Consistency with applicable plans, policies, and regulations related to GHG emissions that are implemented at the District level is discussed above. Of these, the ones that would apply at the individual project level would include Board Policy 6970 (Green Building Policy and Major Renovation Standards), Administrative Procedure 6970 (Green Buildings), implementation of the goals in the Sustainability Levels as feasible, and installation of EV charging stations at new parking facilities. In accordance with Administrative Procedure 6970, the near-term projects would be designed and built to a minimum standard equivalent to a LEED-NC Silver rating and would strive to achieve a standard equivalent to a LEED-NC gold rating. Water efficient features would also be incorporated into the project designs. With adherence to these District policies, implementation of the near-term projects would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

The CMP, including the near-term projects, would not conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of GHGs. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.7.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope of consideration for GHG emissions is global, as such emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to global climate change. By nature, GHG impacts are cumulative as they are the result of combined worldwide emissions over many years, and additional development would incrementally contribute to this cumulative impact. As such, the impact analysis presented above also serves as the project's cumulative impact analysis related to GHG emissions. This approach is consistent with the supporting documentation published by the CNRA when promulgating the SB 97-related CEQA amendments, which indicated that the impact of GHG emissions should be considered in the context of a cumulative impact, rather than a project-level impact. Therefore, as identified in Section 3.7.4, above, the project would not generate GHG emissions that could have a significant impact on the environment and would not conflict with plans adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. The contribution of the CMP, including the near-term projects, to a globally significant cumulative impact related to GHG emissions **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

This section addresses the potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to hazards and hazardous materials are also addressed.

3.8.1 Environmental Setting

A "hazardous material" is defined by California Health and Safety Code Section 25501(n) as a material "that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment." Hazardous materials include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous wastes, and other materials which a handler or the administering agency has a reasonable basis for believing would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment.

3.8.1.1 Hazardous Materials Sites

To determine if hazardous materials sites exist on or adjacent to the Mesa College campus, a records search was conducted by HELIX in February 2026 of federal, state, and local databases of sites that generate, store, treat, or dispose of hazardous materials, or sites for which a hazardous materials release or incident has occurred. Specifically, this included review of the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) EnviroStor database (DTSC 2026) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) GeoTracker database (SWRCB 2026). The EnviroStor database is a geographic information system that lists Federal Superfund Sites; State Response, including Military Facilities and State Superfund; Voluntary Cleanup; and School Cleanup sites. The GeoTracker database is a data management system for tracking potential impacts to groundwater and activities that involve groundwater cleanup, such as remediation for leaking underground storage tanks. The results of the database searches are summarized below.

The GeoTracker database identified three closed Cleanup Program sites and two leaking underground storage tank Cleanup Sites located within 1,000 feet of the project site. All of the listed sites from GeoTracker are currently classified as completed, and the cases are closed. The EnviroStor database identified a school investigation site within the project site, which was required for opening of the on-site high school, though no further action was required. Therefore, none of the listed sites present a contamination concern for the project site.

3.8.1.2 Emergency Response and Evacuation

The County of San Diego's (County's) Office of Emergency Services provides Evacuation Planning Map Books which identify emergency relocation and evacuation routes through the County, classified as Genesys Evacuation Zones. Evacuation routes near the Mesa College campus include Genessee Avenue and portions of Marlesta Drive, Beagle Street, Mesa College Drive, and Armstrong Street (County 2024). The specific evacuation routes used during an emergency are determined by emergency responders who decide the routes that should be used for evacuation at the time of the emergency after assessing the conditions and location of the emergency.

3.8.1.3 Airport Hazards

The nearest airport to the project site is the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport, located approximately one mile northeast of the Mesa College campus. The project site is within the Airport Influence Area (AIA; Review Area 2) of the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (San Diego County Regional Airport Authority [SDCRAA] 2010). In addition, the project site is also within the AIA (Overflight Area Boundary) of the San Diego International Airport (SDCRAA 2025), which is located approximately 4.9 miles southwest of the project site. However, the project site is not within the noise exposure or safety zone contours for these airports.

3.8.1.4 Wildfire Hazards

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has mapped Fire Hazard Severity Zones for San Diego County, and identifies responsibility areas for fire protection, including federal, state, and local responsibility areas. CAL FIRE maintains mapping datasets that estimate fire threat potential throughout California based on presence of flammable vegetation (e.g., fuel), topography, fire history, and climate. Based on these data, areas are mapped as Fire Hazard Severity Zones and assigned one of three levels of fire hazard: moderate, high, and very high.

The City of San Diego (City) has adopted Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) maps that add to the hazard areas recommended by CAL FIRE for its local responsibility area (City 2025). The majority of the campus, excluding only the eastern edge of campus where parking areas and the Design Center (Buildings Z1-Z6) are located, are within the area designated by the City as a VHFHSZ, as shown in Figure 3.18-1, *Wildfire Hazard Zones*. The City identifies all fire hazard zones as VHFHSZs and does not include moderate or high severity designations. It is noted that the central portion of the campus was recommended by CAL FIRE as a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, and the majority of the eastern portion of campus was recommended by CAL FIRE as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CAL FIRE 2025). See Section 3.18, *Wildfire,* for further detail.

3.8.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to hazards and hazardous materials is provided below.

3.8.2.1 Federal

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) works closely with other federal agencies as well as state and local governments to develop and enforce regulations under existing environmental laws. The USEPA is primarily responsible for researching and setting national standards for a variety of environmental programs, and delegates to states and tribes responsibility for issuing permits and monitoring and enforcing compliance. When national standards are not met, the USEPA can issue sanctions and take other steps to assist the states and tribes in reaching the desired levels of environmental quality. USEPA Region 9 has jurisdiction over the southwestern United States, including San Diego County.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) is the predominant federal law governing the ongoing generation and management of hazardous waste. Regulations under RCRA are codified in Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 239 through 282, and provide a framework for "cradle to grave" handling of hazardous waste. Specifically, this requires entities to track their hazardous waste from the point of generation to the point of recycling, reuse, or permanent disposal. The Federal Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984 called for waste minimization and phasing out disposal of hazardous wastes to landfills, developed standards for underground storage tanks, and prescribed the process for corrective action following releases. The USEPA has the primary role of implementing RCRA, although individual states (including California, as outlined below) are also authorized to carry out provisions of the law.

Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Rule

The federal Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Rule (40 CFR 112) was enacted to provide engineering, operational, maintenance, and management strategies that minimize the potential for a spill or release of oil products, such as fuel and petroleum/lubricating oil, from certain storage and operational equipment and activities and prevent an oil spill from entering a waterway. The federal requirements of this rule apply to owners or operators of non-transportation-related, onshore and offshore facilities engaged in drilling, producing, gathering, storing, processing, refining, transferring, distributing, or consuming oil or oil products. Facilities subject to the rule must prepare and implement a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure Plan.

Hazardous Materials Transportation Act of 1975

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) has the authority to regulate the transportation of hazardous materials under Title 49 of the CFR. Last amended in 2005, the Hazardous Materials Transportation Act provides minimum regulations for the transport of hazardous materials by air, land, rail, or water. The four key provisions of the law are the establishment of procedures and policies, rules for material designations and labeling, packaging requirements, and operational rules. The California Highway Patrol and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) are the state agencies with primary responsibility for governing hazardous materials transportation permits in California, enforcing federal and state regulations, and responding to hazardous materials transportation emergencies.

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), commonly known as Superfund, provides national guidelines for responding to releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances and maintains a trust fund to clean up known hazardous waste sites. Federal actions related to CERCLA are limited to sites on the National Priorities List for cleanup activities, with National Priorities List listings based on the USEPA Hazard Ranking System. The Hazard Ranking System is a numerical ranking system used to screen potential sites based on criteria such as the likelihood and nature of hazardous material release, and the potential to affect people or environmental resources. CERCLA was passed in 1980 and was amended in 1986 by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act.

Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act

The Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act made the following changes and additions to the Superfund program under CERCLA:

- The budget allotted to the trust fund for cleanup actions was increased.
- The Hazard Ranking System was revised to more accurately reflect risks that hazardous waste sites pose to human health and the environment.
- State involvement was increased, and changes were made to ensure consistency with other state and federal laws and regulations.
- There was a greater focus on permanent remedies and innovative treatment technologies.
- Citizen participation in the decision-making process was encouraged.

Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act

The Emergency Planning Community Right-to-Know Act was authorized by Title III of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act. The purpose of this act is to support emergency response preparedness and to provide the public with information regarding potential chemical hazards in their communities. The law directs emergency planning committees at the local and state level to develop emergency response plans for chemical releases. It also requires industry entities to provide information to local, state, and federal governments on the storage, use, and release of hazardous chemicals.

Lead and Asbestos Regulations

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission banned the manufacture and sale of lead-containing paint for consumer use in 1978 pursuant to Title 16 of the CFR, Part 1303. This effectively prohibited the use of lead-based paint (LBP) in residential structures and other public-facing buildings. As a result, residential buildings constructed prior to 1978 may contain LBP, while those constructed thereafter are generally not expected to include lead-based coatings.

In 1989, the USEPA issued the Asbestos Ban and Phase-Out Rule under the Toxic Substances Control Act, which was meant to prohibit the manufacture, importation, processing, and distribution of most asbestos-containing products. Although this rule was largely remanded by the U.S. Court of Appeals in 1991, it established prohibitions on new uses of asbestos and permanently banned several specific asbestos-containing materials (ACMs). More recently, under the amended Toxic Substances Control Act authority, USEPA finalized a rule in March 2024 regulating and prohibiting ongoing uses of chrysotile asbestos, the only form of asbestos historically still imported into the United States. This rule, codified at 40 CFR Part 751, continues the federal phase-out of ACMs due to their known carcinogenic health effects.

3.8.2.2 State

California Code of Regulations Title 22

Most state and federal regulations and requirements for hazardous waste are codified in Title 22 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR), Division 4.5. Title 22 contains detailed compliance requirements for hazardous waste generation, transport, treatment, storage, and disposal facilities. California is a state fully authorized to implement RCRA; therefore, most RCRA regulations are integrated into Title 22. The DTSC regulates hazardous waste more stringently than the USEPA, however, so Title 22 does not contain as many exemptions or exclusions as the equivalent federal regulations. Similar to the California Health and Safety Code (as outlined below), Title 22 also regulates a wider range of waste types and waste management activities than RCRA. While California has enacted a number of additional regulations from various CCR titles related to hazardous materials, such as waste and toxics in CCR Titles 26 (Toxics), 23 (Waters) and 27 (Environmental Protection), state hazardous waste regulations are still commonly referred to collectively as Title 22.

California Health and Safety Code, Hazardous Materials Release Response Plans and Inventory

The DTSC has established rules governing the use of hazardous materials and the management of hazardous wastes. California Health and Safety Code Section 25531, et seq., incorporates the requirements of the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act and the Clean Air Act as they pertain to hazardous materials. Under the California Accidental Release Prevention Program, certain businesses that store or handle more than 500 pounds, 55 gallons, or 200 cubic feet (for gases) of acutely hazardous materials at their facilities are required to develop and submit a Risk Management Plan to the appropriate local authorities, the designated local administering agency, and the USEPA for review and approval. The Risk Management Plan is intended to satisfy federal “right-to-know” requirements and provide basic information to regulators and first responders, including identification/quantification of regulated substances used or stored on site, operational and safety mechanisms in place (including employee training), potential on- and off-site consequences of a release, and emergency response provisions.

Under California Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.95, businesses handling or storing certain amounts of hazardous materials are required to prepare a Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP). Recent updates to the California Health and Safety Code, such as those enacted under Assembly Bill (AB) 1716 (effective January 1, 2024), have strengthened the HMBP requirements by mandating more detailed emergency response plans and documented employee training. HMBPs must include a comprehensive inventory of hazardous materials stored on site (above specified quantities), a site-specific emergency response plan, an employee training program, and a written set of procedures and information created to help minimize the effects and extent of a release or threatened release of a hazardous material. HMBPs must be prepared prior to facility operation and updated if there are significant changes in business location, ownership, or operations.

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code Chapter 6.11, the California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) established the Unified Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Materials Management Regulatory Program (Unified Program), which consolidated six existing state programs related to hazards and hazardous materials. The six programs consolidated under the Unified Program are the Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act Program, California Accidental Release Prevention Program, HMBP

requirements, Hazardous Materials Management and Inventory Program, Hazardous Waste and Hazardous Waste Treatment Program, and Underground Storage Tank Program. The Unified Program also allows the designation of Certified Unified Program Agencies to implement associated state regulations within their jurisdictions.

Cortese List

The provisions of Government Code Section 65962.5 are commonly referred to as the Cortese List. The Cortese List is a planning document used by state and local agencies to provide information about hazardous materials release sites. Government Code Section 65962.5 requires CalEPA to develop an updated Cortese List annually, at minimum. DTSC is responsible for a portion of the information contained in the Cortese List. Other state and local government agencies are required to provide additional hazardous material release information for the Cortese List.

Hazardous Waste Control Act

The Hazardous Waste Control Act is implemented by regulations contained in CCR Title 26 that describe requirements for the proper management of hazardous wastes. The act created the state hazardous waste management program, which is similar to, but more stringent than, the federal RCRA program. The Hazardous Waste Control Act and Title 26 regulations list more than 800 potentially hazardous materials and establish criteria for identifying, packaging, transporting, and disposing of such wastes. Under these regulations, the generator of hazardous waste material must complete a manifest that accompanies the material from the point of generation to transportation to the ultimate disposal location, with copies of the manifest filed with the DTSC.

California Building Standards Code

Refer to Section 3.18.2.1 for an overview of fire-specific building regulations included in the California Building Standards Code, including the California Building Code (CBC), California Wildland Urban Interface Code (CWUIC), and California Fire Code (CFC). These regulations specifically address construction within VHFHSZs and require fire-hardened construction to prevent ignitions, allow evacuation, and slow the spread of wildfire.

3.8.2.3 Regional

San Diego County Department of Environmental Health and Quality/Hazardous Materials Division

The County Department of Environment Health and Quality is the designated Certified Unified Program Agency for San Diego County and is responsible for regulating all uses within the County that handle, store, generate, or treat hazardous wastes and materials. The Hazardous Materials Division provides oversight, permitting, and compliance monitoring for several programs, including those related to HMBPs, the Hazardous Waste Generator Program, Underground Storage Tanks, the Aboveground Petroleum Storage Act, the California Accidental Release Prevention Program, and hazardous materials release response plans and inventories. Projects that would encounter or use hazardous materials are required by law to develop applicable HMBPs, obtain and maintain a valid Unified Program Facility Permit, and submit their facility information electronically to the California Environmental Reporting System.

San Diego County Emergency Operations Plan

The San Diego County Emergency Operations Plan is a comprehensive emergency management system that provides for a planned response to natural disaster situations, technological incidents, and nuclear defense operations (County 2022). The Emergency Operations Plan includes operational concepts relating to various emergency situations, identifies components of the Emergency Management Organization, and describes the overall responsibilities for protecting life and property and assuring the overall well-being of the County's population. The Emergency Operations Plan also identifies the sources of outside support that might be provided (through mutual aid and specific statutory authorities) by other jurisdictions, state and federal agencies, and the private sector. Refer to Section 3.18.2.2 for additional discussion of this plan relative to potential wildfire hazards.

San Diego County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The San Diego County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared to meet federal and state requirements for disaster preparedness that make the County eligible for funding and technical assistance from state and federal hazard mitigation programs. The plan includes a risk assessment to enable local jurisdictions to identify and prioritize appropriate mitigation actions that will reduce losses from potential hazards, including flooding, earthquakes, fires, and humanmade hazards. To address potential hazards, the plan then incorporates mitigation goals and objectives, mitigation actions and priorities, an implementation plan, and documentation of the mitigation planning process for each of the twenty-one participating jurisdictions, including the City of San Diego (County 2023). Refer to Section 3.18.2.2 for additional discussion of this plan relative to potential wildfire hazards.

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans

The SDCRAA serves as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for San Diego County and is responsible for adopting Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs) for 16 public use and military airports in the County. The ALUCPs provide guidance on appropriate land uses surrounding airports to protect the health and safety of people and property within the vicinity of an airport. An ALUCP contains policies and criteria that address compatibility between airports and the future land uses that surround them in the areas of noise, overflight, safety, and airspace protection. The project site occurs within the AIAs for the San Diego International Airport and Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport. Refer to Section 3.10.2.2 for further detail regarding ALUCP policies.

3.8.2.4 District

Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

General Specifications

Section 2.2 of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes general specifications and product and material data for the construction of District projects. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs. The following general specifications related to hazardous materials are anticipated to apply to future projects

Removal and Disposal of Hazardous Materials

The general conditions related to removal and disposal of hazardous materials require that hazardous materials, including asbestos, lead, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are managed safely and in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations related to these materials. Before construction begins, a hazardous materials survey must be conducted to identify materials that require specialized handling. If hazardous materials are present, a contractor licensed for abatement and removal activities must be employed to conduct such activities. During construction, the general specifications require containment zones to be established and all construction personnel to be trained and provided appropriate personal protective equipment. Waste manifests must document the proper transportation and disposal of hazardous materials. Once removal activities are complete, air and surface clearance testing is required to confirm the area is free of contamination.

Board Policies and Administrative Procedures

Board Policies 3505 (Emergency Response Plan) and 7415 (Fire, Earthquake, and Disaster Safety) direct the Chancellor to establish procedures that ensure that the District implements a plan to be activated in the event of an emergency or the occurrence of a natural disaster or hazardous condition. This plan must comply with the National Incident Management System, the Standardized Emergency Management System, and should incorporate the functions and principles of the Incident Command System, the Master Mutual Aid Agreement, and other relevant programs. The plan must also identify training requirements for District employees depending on their assigned roles within the emergency plan. Refer to Section 3.18.2.3 for further detail on the campus plans developed in response to these policies.

Board Policy 6800 (Occupational Health and Safety) authorizes the District Chancellor to create and implement an Occupational Health and Safety Program. The program consists of appropriate policies, programs, and procedures to:

1. Identify and evaluate all workplace hazards, including methods to mitigate identified hazards.

2. Delegate responsibility for the implementation and enforcement of the District's Injury and Illness Prevention Plan at each of the District's places of operation.

3. Train all employees, supervisors, and managers in the recognition of workplace hazards and proper safe work practices.

4. Ensure that all employees will comply with safe work practices.

5. Create a system of communications between management and employees to promote a safe working environment, including means for employees to inform the District of potential hazards without the fear of retaliation.

6. Investigate the causes of accidents and illnesses.

7. Correct unsafe or unhealthy conditions or practices in a timely manner.

Mesa College Safety Plans

As required by the California Health and Safety Code regulations described above, the District has developed a HMBP training program for the Mesa College campus (District 2023). This plan provides the written employee training plan for hazardous materials safety and emergency response on campus. The HMBP describes procedures for the safe handling of hazardous materials, including hazardous waste; directions for the use of emergency response equipment and materials; procedures for coordination with local emergency response organizations when necessary; and emergency response procedures for a release or threatened release of hazardous materials.

The Chemical Hygiene Program developed for the campus provides further direction to minimize the exposure of employees, students, and the community to hazardous chemicals (District 2022). This program sets out provisions to control the exposure and release of hazardous chemicals through control methods, work practices, and use of personal protective equipment. The program is applicable to laboratories and maintenance and facilities operations that use or store hazardous chemicals or generate hazardous waste.

3.8.2.5 Local (Non-Regulatory)

While the District is not subject to local zoning or land use planning documents, the campus is located adjacent to the City's right-of-way (ROW) and could require work within these areas. Hazards on campus or in adjacent parts of the City may also require coordination between the District and City. Therefore, a summary of City policies related to hazards and hazardous materials is provided below.

San Diego Municipal Code Hazardous Materials

The San Diego Municipal Code Hazardous Waste Establishment regulations (Chapter 4, Article 2, Division 8) enable the Health Officer to establish a program to monitor establishments where hazardous wastes are produced, stored, handled, disposed of, treated, or recycled, and to provide health care information and other appropriate technical assistance on a 24-hour basis to emergency responders in the event of a hazardous waste incident involving community exposure. The Disclosure of Hazardous Materials regulations (Chapter 4, Article 2, Division 9) establish a system for the provision of information on potential hazards or hazardous materials in the community, including appropriate education and training.

San Diego Municipal Code Public Right-of-Way

Chapter 6, Article 2, Division 12 of the San Diego Municipal Code governs excavation in the public ROW within the City and establishes that traffic control is required for any project that encroaches into the public ROW. This includes public improvement projects, construction activities, and all other work occurring within City ROW areas such as sidewalks, streets, alleys, medians, and parking spaces. The intent of this section is to ensure public safety, maintain traffic flow, and coordinate temporary disruptions to the transportation network. Obtaining a Public Right-of-Way Permit requires submittal of a Traffic Control Plan meeting California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices and City standards as a condition of permit approval.

3.8.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant impact related to hazards or hazardous materials could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials;

2. Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;

3. Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;

4. Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment;

5. For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area;

6. Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan; or

7. Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

3.8.4 Impact Analysis

3.8.4.1 Transport, Use, Disposal of Hazardous Materials

Threshold 1: Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Construction activities under the CMP would involve the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials, including fuels, lubricants, solvents, concrete, paint, and portable septic system wastes. These materials are typical of construction activity and contractors using such materials during construction would be required to adhere to the proper storage, handling, and disposal requirements in accordance with applicable federal, state, and District regulations. In addition, the location of material storage and construction staging areas for each project would be dictated by a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) or Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP), which would include additional storage and containment measures such as requiring the regular maintenance of construction

equipment and providing storage criteria for oil, gasoline, and other potential contaminants that are commonly used during construction activities. While these substances could pose a potential health risk to construction workers and to the public during transport, the storage, transport, handling, and disposal of these materials would occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, County, and District regulations. Based on compliance with regulatory requirements, CMP implementation would not result in a significant hazard to the public or environment through the transport, use, or disposal of construction-related hazardous materials.

The expansion of campus facilities could lead to a long-term increase in the amount of hazardous materials used on campus. However, the types of hazardous materials used at Mesa College would remain similar to those used under existing conditions, since future projects implemented under the CMP would be similar to existing campus land uses. The quantities of common hazardous materials that are used for cleaning, maintenance, and landscaping activities would increase incrementally as additional building and landscape areas are added to campus. Campus operations that require less common types of hazardous materials include laboratory and clinic uses, vehicle maintenance, and pool maintenance. No specific changes to laboratory programming are proposed under the CMP, though future increases in on-campus enrollment could slightly increase the use of hazardous materials in campus laboratories where demand for their use would increase. The new Athletics Complex, Facilities Services, and Community Clinic projects would relocate campus groups that use hazardous materials for these purposes but would not change the types of hazardous materials that are used on campus.

The relocation of hazardous materials use and storage and the slight increase in the quantities of these materials that are used would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment, as management of these materials would continue to occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, County, and District regulations as outlined in the Mesa College Chemical Hygiene Program and HMBP. The Mesa College programs directing use and storage of chemicals would be updated where relevant to reflect changes in the locations of hazardous materials and associated disposal or shutoff locations. Adherence to all applicable regulations would ensure that the hazardous materials used for campus operations are properly managed such that no substantial hazards to the public or the environment occur. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Project-Level

As is the case for all projects under the CMP, implementation of near-term projects would require construction activities that involve the routine transport, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. Project construction activities would comply with the applicable federal, state, County, and District regulations for the storage, handling, and disposal of these materials. The transport of hazardous materials would also be subject to applicable regulations to minimize potential risks to construction workers and the general public. In addition, the small increase in quantities of hazardous materials that would be used for maintenance activities for the near-term projects would be consistent with the materials used under existing conditions and their use would continue to be subject to the same applicable regulations. Based on compliance with regulatory requirements, the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not result in a significant hazard to the public or environment through the transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Given adherence to applicable federal, state, County, and District regulations, future projects implemented under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.8.4.2 Accidental Release of Hazardous Materials

Threshold 2: Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

During construction activities, accidental spills of fuels, lubricants, and other equipment-related liquids classified as hazardous materials could occur. However, as discussed above in Section 3.8.4.1, hazardous construction material storage and staging would be managed by project specific SWPPPs or WPCPs, which would include measures to securely store hazardous materials to avoid accidental spills and establish protocols to follow if a spill occurs. Additionally, existing federal, state, and District standards and regulations are in place for the handling, storage, and transport of these materials; therefore, project construction would not result in reasonably foreseeable upset or accident conditions related to hazardous materials used for construction equipment and processes.

However, implementation of the CMP would involve the demolition of various buildings, many of which were constructed when fewer regulations on building materials were in effect. Federal regulations banned the use of LBPs for residential structures in 1978, which limited the manufacture of LBPs for all structure types. Regulations banning asbestos have continued to evolve as recently as 2024, though the USEPA rule first issued in 1989 (then later remanded) began the phase-out of ACMs in many industries. Due to the age of the structures proposed for demolition, there is potential for the presence of LBPs or ACMs in these structures and proposed demolition activities could result in the release of LBP and ACMs, if they are present. As detailed in the District Standards and Guidelines Manual, a hazardous materials survey is required to identify materials that require specialized handling prior to demolition of a campus building. If hazardous materials are identified, the District employs a contractor licensed for abatement and removal of the identified hazards to manage construction involving these materials as required by USEPA and California Division of Occupational Safety and Health regulations. Demolition and associated waste disposal would also occur in accordance with the applicable regulations for managing hazardous building materials, which would protect construction workers, the general public, and the environment from adverse effects resulting from the release of LBPs or ACMs.

As discussed further in Section 3.8.4.1 above, hazardous materials would be used across campus for cleaning, maintenance, landscaping, laboratories, and other operational activities. The storage and use of hazardous materials would be subject to the applicable regulations detailed in the campus Chemical Hygiene Program and HMBP to prevent potential accident conditions. For small incidental spills, the employee responsible can handle the spill only if appropriately trained and equipped. In addition, safety equipment such as eyewashes, safety showers, fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and spill response kits are

available on campus to address accident conditions. In the event of an accidental release emergency that cannot be readily contained, procedures are set in place in the Chemical Hygiene Program and HMBP for contacting District Police to initiate the Emergency Response Plan if deemed appropriate and conducting evacuation and/or coordination with local emergency responders, as necessary. Based on regulatory compliance, project operation would not create a significant hazard to the public or environment through accidental release of hazardous materials.

Project-Level

As is the case for all projects under the CMP, implementation of the near-term projects would involve construction activities that have the potential to result in accidental spills of equipment-related liquids classified as hazardous materials. Demolition of existing structures could also result in the release of LBP or ACMs. However, construction would occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, County, and District standards and regulations in place for the handling, storage, disposal, and transport of these materials. Similarly, the small increase in the quantities of hazardous materials used for near-term project operations would not increase the potential for upset or accident conditions, as hazardous materials use would continue to be subject to applicable regulations and the campus Chemical Hygiene Program and HMBP. Based on compliance with regulatory requirements, the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Given adherence to applicable federal, state, County, and District regulations, future projects implemented under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.8.4.3 Hazards to Schools

Threshold 3: Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

There are two schools within 0.25 mile of the project site: San Diego Met High School, which is located on campus and would be relocated as part of the project, and Kearny High School, approximately 0.2 mile southeast of campus. The Child Development Center on campus also provides preschool services.

While multiple schools occur within 0.25 mile of the project site, the project would not result in substantial hazards to students. As described above, construction activities would require the temporary use and storage of hazardous materials during construction, and project operations would require the continued use and storage of hazardous materials used for cleaning, maintenance, landscaping, laboratories, and other operational activities. In addition, the types of hazardous materials used on

campus would not change with the project. The use of hazardous materials during construction and operations would occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, County, and District regulations intended to protect the public from adverse effects resulting from hazardous materials. Construction activities associated with relocation of San Diego Met High School would be subject to the same hazardous materials controls. Therefore, the project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school.

Project-Level

As is the case for all projects under the CMP, implementation of the near-term projects would require the use and storage of hazardous materials during construction and operations. No new types of hazardous materials are anticipated to be required for the near-term projects and the small increase in the quantities of hazardous materials used for near-term project operations would not change potential hazards to schools. The near-term projects would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Given adherence to applicable federal, state, and District regulations, future projects implemented under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in significant hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.8.4.4 Listed Hazardous Materials Sites

Threshold 4: Would the project be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. As described in Section 3.8.1, a search of hazardous materials site databases identified three cleanup program sites and two leaking underground storage tank sites located within or adjacent to the project site; however, each of these cases has been closed. In addition, a school investigation site was identified within the project site but no further action was required. Therefore, the project would not be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be located within the Mesa College campus described in the program-level analysis above. Therefore, the near-term projects would not be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not occur on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and would not create an associated hazard to the public or the environment. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.8.4.5 Airport Hazards

Threshold 5: For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As described in Section 3.8.1, the entirety of the Mesa College campus is within Review Area 2 of the AIA associated with Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (SDCRAA 2010) and is within the Overflight Area Boundary and AIA associated with San Diego International Airport (SDCRAA 2025). However, the project site is not within the noise exposure or safety zone contours for these airports (SDCRAA 2010; SDCRAA 2025).

AIA Review Area 2 of the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport consists of locations beyond Review Area 1 but within airspace protection and overflight notification areas. Limits on the heights of structures, particularly in areas of high terrain, are the only restrictions on land uses within Review Area 2. The recordation of overflight notification documents is also required in locations within Review Area 2. The project would comply with the actions required for Review Area 2, with individual projects potentially subject to ALUC review. This includes review of projects in an area of terrain penetration to airspace surfaces that has a height greater than 35 feet above ground level, as outlined in the airport's ALUCP (SDCRAA 2010). The District would not construct new campus facilities that conflict with the height limits in the ALUCP and would, therefore, not result in a hazard to aircraft navigation. The CMP would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area.

San Diego International Airport's Overflight Area Boundary establishes the area under which the overflight notification policy applies. Owners of newly constructed dwelling units located within this area are required to be notified of the effects of aircraft overflight (SDCRAA 2025). The District would own the residential projects implemented on the Mesa College campus, but would provide disclosure of aircraft noise to future tenants as required by the ALUCP. As such, no associated safety hazard would occur.

Project-Level

The near-term Athletics Complex and Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure projects would be constructed within the AIA (Review Area 2) of the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport and the AIA (Overflight Area Boundary) of the San Diego International Airport. Therefore, they would be subject to regulations for projects within the San Diego International Airport Overflight Area and Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport Review Area 2, including potential review by the ALUC depending on their ground elevation and final proposed height. The near-term projects would be similar

in height to existing campus development and would not exceed height limits related to airspace or result in a hazard to aircraft navigation. The near-term projects also would not be within the noise exposure range or safety zone contours for the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport or the San Diego International Airport. Therefore, the near-term projects would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project areas.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Given adherence to applicable regulations within the ALUCPs for San Diego International Airport and Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport, future projects implemented under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.8.4.6 Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans

Threshold 6: Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As future CMP projects would be constructed within the campus boundaries, construction work would not substantially impair emergency response or evacuation plans which direct evacuation towards major City roads. The County of San Diego has prepared a Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan to address hazards that threaten the County (including the City), determine likely impacts, and set mitigation goals and strategies for emergencies such as dam failures, floods, earthquakes, drought, liquefaction, landslides, wildfires, and other severe weather events. The project would not affect the ability of the County or City to implement the risk mitigation measures identified in the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The evacuation routes near the Mesa College campus identified in this plan include Genessee Avenue and portions of Marlesta Drive, Beagle Street, Mesa College Drive, and Armstrong Street. Long-term implementation of the CMP would result in minor adjustments at campus entrances along some of these roadways but would not prevent their continued use as emergency evacuation routes.

Once operational, CMP projects would not conflict with campus emergency response or evacuation plans. The District has developed its Emergency Communications Response Plan (Administrative Procedure 7415.2), which implements Board Policy 7415, Fire, Earthquake and Disaster Safety, to ensure dissemination of information to students, employees, and the community in a consistent and effective manner in the event of an emergency. In addition, the Mesa College Emergency Management Program directs response procedures for a variety of emergency situations that could occur on campus. The evacuation plans that comprise a portion of this program would be updated with evacuation routes for new campus buildings as they are constructed, but no impairment of these plans would occur as a result of CMP implementation.

During construction activities, however, there is potential for staging or construction to result in temporary changes to emergency access and public roadways. For construction that would occur within the City ROW, such as for alterations to campus entrances that affect City streets, the District would be

required to obtain and comply with the condition of a Public Right-of-Way Permit to prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan to ensure emergency access is maintained on City streets. During construction occurring outside of City ROWs, construction-related road closures could interfere with emergency access within the campus. While the District intends to maintain emergency access by clearly delineating the limits of construction work and providing signage where temporary circulation changes are required, these procedures are not mandated by law. Therefore, future CMP projects could temporarily impair emergency response or evacuation plans during construction.

Project-Level

The near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not cause a direct increase in the campus' population but would result in additional on-campus building areas that could affect the existing emergency response framework for the campus. Construction of the near-term projects is not anticipated to encroach into City roadways, though on-campus construction could temporarily impair emergency access within the campus circulation network.

The near-term projects would be constructed within the existing campus boundaries and would not conflict with City or County evacuation or response plans. Once operational, both of the near-term projects would be incorporated into the Mesa College campus evacuation plans. Therefore, operation of the near-term projects would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan but could interfere with emergency access to campus through construction-period road closures on campus. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

Mitigation measure TRA-1, provided in Section 3.15.4.4, which would require notifications, identification of alternative emergency routes, and implementation of appropriate signage in the event of on-campus lane or roadway closures, would apply to future campus projects.

Project-Level

Mitigation measure TRA-1, provided in Section 3.15.4.4, would apply to both of the near-term projects.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure TRA-1 would reduce program-level and project-level impacts related to construction-period emergency access to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.8.4.7 Wildland Fires

Threshold 7: Would the project expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As described in Section 3.8.1.4, the majority of the Mesa College campus occurs within a VHFHSZ and portions of that area are designated within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI; refer to Figure 3.18-1). While future projects constructed on campus would therefore be exposed to wildland fire risk, these projects would not exacerbate the risk of fire in this area as they would continue the same land use types that occur under existing conditions and would not place new buildings in previously undeveloped wildland areas. Rather, new buildings and structures would be constructed to the more stringent building code requirements that have been developed and enacted since the construction of older buildings on campus. Compliance with the CBC, CWUIC, and CFC requirements related to fire, specifically those addressing construction within VHFHSZs, would require the use of ignition-resistant materials, the installation of automatic fire sprinkler and alarm systems, establishment of defensible space, and the inclusion of fire access roads. Refer to Section 3.18, *Wildfire*, for further discussion and analysis of wildfire risk and related building code requirements. Overall, implementation of the CMP would not increase the risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires within the project site.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be located within the VHFHSZ and therefore be exposed to potential wildland fire risk. However, both of the projects would be constructed in accordance with the applicable fire safety requirements, including those requirements specific to VHFHSZs and would not increase the risk of wildland fires. Refer to Section 3.18, *Wildfire*, for further discussion and analysis of wildfire risk. The near-term projects would not result in a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.8.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials are generally site-specific, as risks associated with hazards and hazardous materials in one location do not result in risks elsewhere. Therefore, the geographic area for the analysis of cumulative impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials consists of properties adjacent to the Mesa College campus.

3.8.5.1 Transport, Use, Disposal of Hazardous Materials

Similar to the proposed CMP, cumulative development projects would require transportation, use, and disposal of hazardous materials. However, like projects implemented under the CMP, cumulative

projects would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to the handling and storage of hazardous materials. Through the proper handling and storage of hazardous materials in accordance with these regulations and/or activity-specific permit conditions, cumulative projects would not result in a hazard to the public or the environment. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to the transport, use, and disposal of hazardous material would be **less than significant.**

3.8.5.2 Accidental Release of Hazardous Materials

Similar to the proposed CMP, cumulative development projects would require the use and storage of hazardous materials, which carries the potential to result in the accidental release of hazardous materials. However, like projects implemented under the CMP, cumulative projects would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations or permit conditions related to the handling and storage of hazardous materials, including the requirements for spill containment and cleanup procedures as well as hazardous building material removal (such as LBP and ACMs). The proper handling and storage of hazardous materials would minimize the potential for accidental spills, while implementation of spill containment and cleanup procedures would prevent significant hazards to the public or the environment in the event of accidental spills. As such, cumulative impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.8.5.3 Hazards to Schools

Similar to the proposed CMP, cumulative development projects could use or emit hazardous materials and could be located within a quarter mile of schools. However, like projects implemented under the CMP, cumulative projects would be required to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations related to the handling and storage of hazardous materials, which are intended to protect all populations from these hazards, including students. Through the proper handling and storage of hazardous materials, cumulative projects would not result in a hazard to schools. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to hazards to schools would be **less than significant.**

3.8.5.4 Listed Hazardous Materials Sites

As discussed in Section 3.8.4.4, the Mesa College campus is not a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Future cumulative projects could be proposed on properties that contain these hazardous sites. However, in these cases, projects would undergo project-level review, potentially including preparation of Phase I and/or Phase II Environmental Site Assessment or similar studies to evaluate the condition of the identified hazard. A cumulative project that proposes development of a potential hazardous materials site would be required to remediate the existing site contamination consistent with applicable regulations and under the oversight of the applicable regulatory agency prior to occupancy. With adherence to regulations, cumulative impacts resulting from development of hazardous materials sites would be **less than significant**.

3.8.5.5 Airport Hazards

As discussed in Section 3.8.4.5, the Mesa College campus is not within the noise exposure range or safety zone contours of an airport. Cumulative projects could be proposed within these contours or similar contours from other airports in the region. As is the case for the CMP, these cumulative projects would be required to achieve compliance with the ALUCP compatibility criteria relevant to their respective airport, location within noise or safety contours, and proposed land use type. With adherence

to regulations and requirements outlined in ALUCPs, cumulative impacts related to airport hazards would be **less than significant**.

3.8.5.6 Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans

Construction of future cumulative development projects in the City could result in interference with emergency response or evacuation plans during temporary construction activities that block access routes. Such projects would also be required to provide adequate emergency access in accordance with the CFC and CBC. However, no cumulative projects are reasonably anticipated to result in permanent changes to the nearby highways and arterials such that access to existing emergency evacuation routes would be eliminated. Development within the Mesa College campus would not physically interfere with emergency response or evacuation plans because the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not include features that prevent continued implementation of these plans. In addition, the projects implemented under the CMP would be subject to the requirements of the City's ROW Permit for work within public roads, which would include the requirement to prepare a Traffic Control Plan, or mitigation measure TRA-1 for work within the campus. These requirements would ensure the maintenance of emergency access during construction. Similarly, cumulative development projects within the City would be required to comply with relevant City policies related to circulation under a Traffic Control Plan to ensure that emergency access is maintained during construction. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to emergency response and evacuation plans would be **less than significant**.

3.8.5.7 Wildland Fires

Similar to the proposed CMP projects, cumulative development projects could be located within or adjacent to VHFHSZs. Cumulative development projects within the City would be required to adhere to all regulatory requirements in place to minimize wildfire hazards due to construction in these areas, including compliance with the relevant sections of the CFC, CWUIC, and CBC, and establishment of defensible space to prevent the spread of wildfire. While cumulative projects could increase the amount of development in VHFHSZs throughout the City, adherence to the applicable regulatory requirements would reduce potential risks to people and property. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to wildland fire risk would be **less than significant**.

3.9 Hydrology and Water Quality

This section addresses the potential hydrology and water quality impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to hydrology and water quality are also addressed.

3.9.1 Environmental Setting

3.9.1.1 Hydrology and Drainage Conditions

The San Diego region is divided into two hydrologic basins by the northwest-trending Peninsular Range. The San Diego Hydrologic Basin is on the gently sloping western side of the range, and the Colorado River Hydrologic Basin is on the steep eastern side. The San Diego Hydrologic Basin is divided into hydrologic units (HUs), which are entire watersheds made up of one or more rivers or streams. Each HU, or watershed, is divided into hydrologic areas (HAs), which are the major tributaries or major groundwater basins within the watershed. Hydrologic subareas (HSAs), which include water-bearing and non-water-bearing formations, are major subdivisions of HAs.

The San Diego Hydrologic Basin includes 11 HUs: Carlsbad, San Dieguito, Los Peñasquitos, San Diego, Pueblo San Diego, Sweetwater, Otay, San Luis Rey, San Juan, Santa Margarita, and Tijuana. All 11 of these HUs ultimately drain towards the west into the Pacific Ocean. The Mesa College campus lies within the Los Peñasquitos HU, which covers approximately 170 square miles and is composed of major streams, numerous creeks, two coastal lagoons (Los Peñasquitos Lagoon and Mission Bay), and one major reservoir (Miramar Reservoir). The Los Peñasquitos HU is further divided into five distinct HAs: Scripps, Miramar, Tecolote, Poway, and Miramar Reservoir. The campus lies within the Tecolote HA and the Tecolote HSA as defined by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB).

The Mesa College campus is also within the Mission Bay Watershed Management Area (WMA), which is an area that is defined for the purpose of Water Quality Improvement Plan (WQIP) development. The applicable WQIP for the campus is the Mission Bay WQIP (RWQCB 2026a). The Mission Bay WMA encompasses approximately 64 square miles and hosts approximately 232,000 residents. Approximately 37 percent of the watershed is undeveloped, mainly in the upper, eastern portion. The remaining 63 percent of the land area is being utilized as residential development (28 percent), roadways and transportation (16 percent), office and institutional lands (7 percent), and other uses (12 percent). The remaining “other” land (12 percent) includes industrial, commercial, and agricultural land uses (Project Clean Water 2025).

For the Mission Bay WQIP, the WMA was divided into four subwatersheds: Mission Bay, Scripps/Pacific Beach, Rose Canyon, and Tecolote Creek. The project site is located within the Tecolote Creek subarea. Rainfall to the area primarily drains through Rose Creek and Tecolote Creek, which discharge into Mission Bay before flowing into the Pacific Ocean (Project Clean Water 2025).

3.9.1.2 Water Quality Conditions

Point Source Pollutants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) defines point source pollution as “any single identifiable source of pollution from which pollutants are discharged, such as a pipe, ditch, ship or

factory smokestack." Factories and sewage treatment plants are two common types of point sources. Factories, including oil refineries, pulp and paper mills, and chemical, electronics and automobile manufacturers, typically discharge one or more pollutants in their discharged waters (called effluents). Some factories discharge their effluents directly into a waterbody, while others treat it themselves before it is released or send their wastes to sewage treatment plants for treatment.

Another way that some factories and sewage treatment plants handle waste material is by mixing it with urban runoff in a combined sewer system. As the runoff crosses urban surfaces, it picks up chemicals and pollutants, and this untreated, polluted water then runs directly into a sewer system. When it rains excessively, a combined sewer system may not be able handle the volume of water, and some of the combined runoff and raw sewage will overflow from the system, discharging directly into the nearest waterbody without being treated. This combined sewer overflow is considered point source pollution and can cause severe damage to human health and the environment. Unregulated discharges from point sources can result in water pollution and unsafe drinking water, and can restrict activities like fishing and swimming.

To control point source discharges, the Clean Water Act (CWA) established the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Under the NPDES program, factories, sewage treatment plants, and other point sources must obtain a permit from the state and USEPA before they can discharge their waste or effluents into any body of water. Prior to discharge, the point source must use the latest technologies available to treat its effluents and reduce the level of pollutants. If necessary, a second, more stringent set of controls can be placed on a point source to protect a specific waterbody (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] 2026). Refer to Section 3.9.2.1 below for additional information.

Nonpoint Source Pollutants

Nonpoint source pollution is pollution that originates from diffuse sources rather than a single point of discharge. It is typically generated when rainfall or snowmelt moves over and through the ground and picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, ultimately depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands, coastal waters, and groundwater. Common nonpoint source pollutants can include: fertilizers, herbicides, and insecticides from agricultural lands and residential areas; oil, grease, and toxic chemicals from urban runoff and energy production; sediment from improperly managed construction sites, crop and forest lands, and eroding streambanks; salt from irrigation practices and acid drainage from abandoned mines; bacteria and nutrients from livestock, pet wastes, and faulty septic systems; and atmospheric deposition and hydromodification. Urbanization can increase the generation and transport of nonpoint source pollutants relative to natural conditions, thereby affecting the water quality of adjacent streams and downstream receiving waters. Accordingly, an important consideration in evaluating stormwater quality is to assess whether nonpoint source pollutants would impair the beneficial uses of receiving waters. While receiving waters can assimilate limited quantities of various constituent elements, concentrations that exceed applicable thresholds may degrade water quality and result in adverse environmental effects.

Characteristics of Runoff

Standard parameters, which can assess the quality of stormwater, provide a method of measuring impairment. The quantity of a material in the environment and its characteristics determine the degree of availability as a pollutant in surface runoff. In an urban environment, the quantity of certain

pollutants in the environment is a function of the intensity of the land use. For instance, a high density of automobile traffic makes a number of potential pollutants (such as lead and hydrocarbons) more available. The availability of a material, such as a fertilizer, is a function of the quantity and the manner in which it is applied. Applying fertilizer in quantities that exceed plant needs leaves the excess nutrients available for loss to surface runoff or groundwater. Water quality parameters for stormwater comprise a long list and are classified in many ways. Typically, the concentration of an urban pollutant, rather than the annual load of that pollutant, is required to assess a water quality problem.

3.9.1.3 Receiving Waters

Receiving waters is a general term typically used to describe any water body, such as a creek, river, lake, bay, or ocean that receives runoff. The receiving waters for the Mission Bay WMA include San Clemente Creek, Rose Creek, Tecolote Creek, the San Diego River, Mission Bay, and the Pacific Ocean.

Beneficial Uses

Beneficial uses are the uses of water necessary for the survival or wellbeing of humans, plants, and wildlife, and are outlined below for each of the project's receiving water bodies as defined in the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin (Basin Plan; RWQCB 2021).

- **San Clemente Creek**: Contact Water Recreation (REC-1), Non-contact Water Recreation (REC-2), Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM), Cold Freshwater Habitat (COLD), Wildlife Habitat (WILD), Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE), and Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN) are existing beneficial uses. Industrial Service Supply (IND) is a potential beneficial use. These inland surface waters are excluded from the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) beneficial use.

- **Rose Creek**: Contact Water Recreation (REC-1), Non-contact Water Recreation (REC-2), Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM), and Wildlife Habitat (WILD) are existing beneficial uses. Industrial Service Supply (IND) is a potential beneficial use. These inland surface waters are excluded from the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) beneficial use.

- **Tecolote Creek**: Non-contact Water Recreation (REC-2), Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM), and Wildlife Habitat (WILD) are existing beneficial uses. Contact Water Recreation (REC-1) is a potential beneficial use. These inland surface waters are excluded from the Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN) beneficial use.

- **San Diego River**: Municipal and Domestic Supply (MUN), Agricultural Supply (AGR), Industrial Service Supply (IND), Industrial Process Supply (PROC), Contact Water Recreation (REC-1), Non-contact Water Recreation (REC-2), Warm Freshwater Habitat (WARM), Cold Freshwater Habitat (COLD), and Wildlife Habitat (WILD) are existing beneficial uses.

- **Mission Bay**: Industrial Service Supply (IND), Contact Water Recreation (REC-1), Non-contact Water Recreation (REC-2), Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM), Estuarine Habitat (EST), Wildlife Habitat (WILD), Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE), Marine Habitat (MAR), Migration of Aquatic Organisms (MIGR), Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN), and Shellfish Harvesting (SHELL) are existing beneficial uses.

- **Pacific Ocean**: Industrial Service Supply (IND), Navigation (NAV), Contact Water Recreation (REC-1), Non-contact Water Recreation (REC-2), Commercial and Sport Fishing (COMM), Preservation of Biological Habitats of Special Significance (BIOL), Wildlife Habitat (WILD), Rare, Threatened, or Endangered Species (RARE), Marine Habitat (MAR), Aquaculture (AQUA), Migration of Aquatic Organisms (MIGR), Spawning, Reproduction, and/or Early Development (SPWN), and Shellfish Harvesting (SHELL) are existing beneficial uses.

303(d) List and Total Maximum Daily Load Status

Under Section 303(d) of the 1972 CWA, states, territories, and authorized tribes are required to develop a list of water quality limited segments. The waters on these lists do not meet water quality standards, even after point sources of pollution have installed the minimum required levels of pollution control technology. The law requires the establishment priority rankings for water on the lists and develop action plans, called Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), to improve water quality. The San Diego RWQCB is responsible for developing the 303(d) list in the San Diego region.

The receiving waters for the Mission Bay WMA that are currently listed as impaired (based on the 2024 303[d] List) include Rose Creek, Tecolote Creek, the Lower San Diego River, and Mission Bay (State Water Resources Control Board [SWRCB] 2024). While portions of the Pacific Ocean shoreline within the San Diego RWQCB jurisdiction are included on the 303(d) list, the Los Peñasquitos HU or Tecolote HA sections of shoreline are not identified as impaired.

- **Rose Creek:** The pollutants/stressors causing impairment of Rose Creek are benthic community effects, bifenthrin, cyfluthrin, indicator bacteria, nitrogen, phosphorus, pyrethroids, total dissolved solids, selenium, and toxicity.

- **Tecolote Creek:** The pollutants/stressors causing impairment of Tecolote Creek are benthic community effects, bifenthrin, cypermethrin, cyfluthrin, cyhalothrin, lambda, permethrin, pyrethroids, pH, diazinon, nitrogen, phosphorus, selenium, toxicity, indicator bacteria, and turbidity.

- **Lower San Diego River:** The pollutants/stressors causing impairment of the Lower San Diego River are benthic community effects, indicator bacteria, nitrogen, oxygen (dissolved), phosphorous, total dissolved solids, bifenthrin, chlordane, chloride, color, cyfluthrin, cypermethrin, permethrin, pyrethroids, turbidity, and toxicity.

- **Mission Bay:** The pollutants/stressors causing impairment of Mission Bay (including at mouth of Tecolote Creek and mouth of Rose Creek) include mercury, indicator bacteria, polychlorinated biphenyls, lead, copper, and eutrophic.

3.9.1.4 Regional Groundwater Quality

The campus is not located within a designated groundwater basin. The nearest mapped groundwater basin to campus is the Mission Valley Groundwater Basin (9-014), which is located approximately three miles southwest of the Mesa College campus, near the San Diego River. This groundwater basin is a Very Low Priority Basin and is not designated as a critically overdrafted basin or adjudicated area by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR; 2020). Pursuant to the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act, groundwater sustainability plans to manage long-term sustainability of groundwater

are not required for Very Low Priority Basins. In addition, groundwater use in the County of San Diego (County) is limited due to low recharge from sparse rainfall and comprises a very small portion (approximately seven percent) of the San Diego region's water supply portfolio (San Diego County Water Authority [SDCWA] 2026).

3.9.1.5 Floodplain Mapping

The campus is included on Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) Number 06073C1616G, dated May 16, 2012, and is located in Zone X (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] 2012). Zone X is defined as areas of moderate flood hazard, usually the area between the limits of the 100-year and 500-year floods. The Zone X designation is also used to identify base floodplains of lesser hazards, such as areas protected by levees from the one percent annual flood, or shallow flooding areas with average depths of less than one foot or drainage areas less than one square mile. The campus is not located within a 100-year flood zone. A Special Flood Hazard Area (Zone A) associated with the Tecolote Creek drainage system is located approximately 0.2 mile southwest of the campus.

3.9.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to hydrology and water quality is provided below.

3.9.2.1 Federal

Clean Water Act

The principal law governing pollution of the nation's surface waters is the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (i.e., the CWA). Originally enacted in 1948, it was amended in 1972 and has remained substantially the same since. The CWA consists of two major parts: provisions that authorize federal financial assistance for municipal sewage treatment plant construction and regulatory requirements that apply to industrial and municipal dischargers. The CWA authorizes the establishment of effluent standards on an industry basis. The CWA also requires states to adopt water quality standards that "consist of the designated uses of the navigable waters involved and the water quality criteria for such waters based upon such uses." The CWA forms the basic national framework for the management of water quality and the control of pollution discharges; it provides the legal framework for several water quality regulations, including the NPDES, effluent limitations, water quality standards, pretreatment standards, antidegradation policy, nonpoint-source discharge programs, and wetlands protection. The USEPA has delegated the responsibility for the administration of portions of the CWA to state and regional agencies.

Impaired Water Bodies

CWA Section 303(d) and California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (described below) require that the state establish the beneficial uses of its state waters and adopt water quality standards to protect those beneficial uses. Section 303(d) establishes a TMDL, which is the maximum quantity of a contaminant that a water body can maintain without experiencing adverse effects, to guide the application of state water quality standards. Section 303(d) also requires the state to identify "impaired" streams (water bodies affected by the presence of pollutants or contaminants) and to establish the TMDL for each stream.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

To achieve its objectives, the CWA is based on the concept that all discharges into the nation's waters are unlawful, unless specifically authorized by a permit. The NPDES is the permitting program for the discharge of pollutants into surface waters of the U.S. under CWA Section 402. Thus, industrial and municipal dischargers (point source discharges) must obtain NPDES permits from the appropriate RWQCB (i.e., the San Diego RWQCB in the project region). The existing NPDES (Phase I) stormwater program requires municipalities serving more than 1,000,000 persons to obtain an NPDES stormwater permit for any construction project larger than five acres. Proposed NPDES stormwater regulations (Phase II) expand this existing national program to smaller municipalities with populations of 10,000 persons or more and construction sites that disturb more than one acre. For other dischargers, such as those affecting groundwater or from non-point sources, a Report of Waste Discharge must be filed with the RWQCB. For specified situations, some permits may be waived, and some discharge activities may be included in an existing General Permit.

National Flood Insurance Program

Congress passed the National Flood Insurance Act of 1968 and the Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973, which are intended to reduce the need for large, publicly-funded flood control structures and disaster relief by restricting development on floodplains.

The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) provides a means for property owners to financially protect themselves from flood damage. The NFIP offers flood insurance to homeowners, renters, and business owners if their community participates in the program. Participating communities agree to adopt and enforce ordinances that meet or exceed FEMA requirements to reduce the risk of flooding. The City of San Diego (City) is a participant and must adhere to the NFIP. The District is not a separate participant in the NFIP but may obtain flood insurance and rely on maps prepared to identify flood hazards in the City.

Through its Flood Hazard Mapping Program, FEMA identifies flood hazards, assesses flood risks, and partners with states and communities to provide accurate flood hazard and risk data. Flood hazard mapping is an important part of the NFIP, as it is the basis of the NFIP regulations and flood insurance requirements. FEMA maintains and updates data through FIRMs and risk assessments. A FIRM is an official map of a community on which FEMA has delineated both the special hazard areas and the risk premium zones applicable to the community.

A Special Flood Hazard Area is an area within a floodplain having a one percent or greater chance of flood occurrence within any given year (commonly referred to as the 100-year flood zone). Special Flood Hazard Areas are delineated on flood hazard boundary maps issued by FEMA. The Flood Disaster Protection Act of 1973 and the National Flood Insurance Reform Act of 1994 make flood insurance mandatory for most properties in Special Flood Hazard Areas.

3.9.2.2 State

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The CWA places the primary responsibility for the control of surface water pollution and for planning the development and use of water resources with the states, although it establishes certain guidelines for

states to follow in developing their programs and allows the USEPA to withdraw control from states with inadequate implementation mechanisms.

California's primary statute governing water quality and water pollution issues with respect to both surface waters and groundwater is the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California Water Code Section 13000, et seq.). The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act grants the SWRCB and the RWQCBs authority and responsibility to adopt plans and policies, to regulate discharges to surface and groundwater, to regulate waste disposal sites, and to require cleanup of discharges of hazardous materials and other pollutants. The act also establishes reporting requirements for unintended discharges of any hazardous substance, sewage, or oil or petroleum product.

Each RWQCB must formulate and adopt a water quality control plan for its region. The regional plans must conform to the policies set forth in the Porter-Cologne Act and established by the SWRCB in its state water policy. The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act also provides that a RWQCB may include within its regional plan water discharge prohibitions applicable to particular conditions, areas, or types of waste. The San Diego RWQCB has adopted the Basin Plan, which is the applicable water quality control plan for the San Diego region and is discussed further in Section 3.9.2.3 below.

California Toxics Rule

The California Toxics Rule is a federal regulation issued by the USEPA providing water quality criteria for potentially toxic constituents in receiving waters with human health or aquatic life designated uses in California. California Toxics Rule criteria are applicable to the receiving water body and therefore must be calculated based on the probable hardness values of the receiving waters for evaluation of acute (and chronic) toxicity criteria. At higher hardness values for the receiving water, copper, lead, and zinc are more likely to be complexed (bound with) components in the water column. This in turn reduces the bioavailability and resulting potential toxicity of these metals.

State Water Resources Control Board

The SWRCB administers water rights, water pollution control, and water quality functions throughout the state, while the RWQCBs conduct planning, permitting, and enforcement activities. Construction permitting is administered by the SWRCB, while post-construction permitting is administered by the RWQCB. In California, NPDES permits are also referred to as waste discharge requirements that regulate discharges to waters of the U.S.

Construction General Permit

On November 16, 1990, the USEPA published final regulations that established stormwater permit application requirements for specified categories of industries. The regulations provide that discharges of stormwater to waters of the U.S. from construction projects are effectively prohibited unless the discharge complies with an NPDES Permit. On September 8, 2022, the SWRCB reissued the Construction Stormwater General Permit (Water Quality Order 2022-0057-DWQ).

Projects that disturb one or more acres of soil or are part of a larger common plan that, in total, disturbs one or more acres, are required to obtain coverage under the Construction General Permit. Construction activity subject to this permit includes clearing, grading, and disturbances to the ground, such as stockpiling or excavation, but does not include regular maintenance activities performed to restore a facility's original line, grade, or capacity. To obtain coverage under the Construction General

Permit, Permit Registration Documents, including a Notice of Intent, Risk Assessment, Site Map, and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), among others, must be filed with the SWRCB prior to the commencement of construction activity. The Notice of Intent notifies the SWRCB of the applicant's intent to comply with the Construction General Permit, and the SWPPP includes a list of best management practices (BMPs) that would be used to protect stormwater runoff from pollutant discharge during construction. Additionally, the project's SWPPP must contain a visual monitoring program and a chemical monitoring program for "non-visible" pollutants to be implemented if there is a failure of BMPs.

Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System Permit

The Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit is a regulatory program under the federal CWA and California's Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act that requires cities, counties, and other permitted agencies to reduce pollutants in stormwater runoff to the maximum extent practicable. The permit mandates a comprehensive stormwater management program that includes public education, construction and post-construction stormwater controls, illicit-discharge detection and elimination, watershed-based planning, and monitoring to ensure compliance with water-quality standards. MS4 permittees must implement BMPs, enforce stormwater ordinances, and integrate low-impact development (LID) strategies to reduce runoff volume and pollutant loads.

The MS4 Phase I regulation requires medium and large cities or certain counties with populations of 100,000 or more individuals to obtain NPDES permit coverage for their stormwater discharges. The San Diego RWQCB regulates discharges from Phase I MS4s under the Regional MS4 Permit, which covers 39 municipal, county, and special district entities within its jurisdiction, including the City of San Diego.

The MS4 Phase II regulation extends NPDES permit coverage to smaller MS4s in urban areas with a population of more than 50,000 people as well as non-traditional MS4s associated with uses such as public universities, departments of transportation, hospitals, or prisons. Many Phase II MS4s are covered by statewide General Permits, though some states issue individual permits. In California, the SWRCB has adopted a general Statewide Small MS4 Permit under which special entities may enroll. The District is not currently an enrolled entity under Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ (RWQCB 2026) but intends to comply with the NPDES regulations through the MS4 Phase II program (refer to Section 3.9.2.4 below).

Sustainable Groundwater Management Act

The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) established a framework for sustainable, local groundwater management in 2014. The SGMA requires groundwater-dependent regions to halt overdraft and bring basins into balanced levels of pumping and recharge. With the passage of the SGMA, the DWR launched the Sustainable Groundwater Management Program to implement the law and provide ongoing support to local agencies around the state. The SGMA requires local agencies to form groundwater sustainability agencies for high and medium priority basins and to implement groundwater sustainability plans within 20 years. The DWR maintains the online SGMA Basin Prioritization Dashboard, which identifies the priority of the groundwater basins in California on a scale of Very Low to High based on a point system that considers factors including population, available wells, irrigated acres, and groundwater resilience. Groundwater basins with more than 14 points are considered Medium or High Priority, while basins with 14 or less points are considered Low or Very Low Priority.

3.9.2.3 Regional

Water Quality Control Plan for the San Diego Basin

The Basin Plan, originally adopted in 1994 by the RWQCB with amendments effective on or before September 2021 (RWQCB 2021), sets forth water quality objectives for constituents that could potentially cause an adverse effect or impact on the beneficial uses of water. The Basin Plan contains the water quality objectives, policies, regulations, and implementation programs for the protection of surface and ground waters within the San Diego Region. The Basin Plan describes the beneficial uses that each water body supports and are the basis for San Diego RWQCB regulatory actions. The Basin Plan incorporates by reference all applicable SWRCB and RWQCB plans and policies. Specifically, the Basin Plan is designed to accomplish the following:

- Designate beneficial uses for surface water and groundwater;
- Set the narrative and numerical objectives that must be attained or maintained to protect the designated beneficial uses and conform to the state's anti-degradation policy;
- Describe implementation programs to protect the beneficial uses of all waters within the region; and
- Describe surveillance and monitoring activities to evaluate the effectiveness of the Basin Plan.

Water Quality Improvement Plan for the Mission Bay Watershed Management Area

The WQIP for the Mission Bay WMA is a document developed under the framework of the San Diego Regional Municipal Stormwater Permit and the federal CWA. It delineates a watershed-based strategy to reduce pollutant loading and improve beneficial uses within four hydrologically distinct subwatersheds: Rose Creek, Tecolote Creek, Mission Bay, and Scripps. The plan identifies priority water quality conditions, primarily pathogen indicators, and establishes numeric goals and load reduction benchmarks based on TMDL allocations and receiving water limitations. The WQIP identifies BMPs such as LID strategies, hydromodification controls, and structural treatment systems to mitigate urban runoff. The WQIP integrates monitoring, data analysis, and performance assessment to refine strategies over time. Mission Bay, designated for contact recreation (REC-1) and wildlife habitat (WILD) beneficial uses, is a focal point of the WQIP due to its impaired status and high public exposure.

3.9.2.4 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Design Guides and Standards

Section 2.1, Design Guides and Standards, of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes guidelines for the design of facilities on the District campuses. The following guidelines in this section are related to hydrology and water quality.

Project Programming

The Project Programming section requires the integration of LID concepts where possible into landscaped areas and site improvements to manage stormwater runoff as a resource. Specific implementation techniques include the following:

a. Utilize site design measures to reduce, or replicate, pre-construction water balance.
b. Conserve natural area, soils, and vegetation and minimize disturbances to natural drainage areas.
c. Incorporate landscape designs that promote water retention and evaporation.
d. Maximize the percentage of pervious surfaces for low traffic areas, parking lots, trails, and pedestrian walkways to allow percolation of stormwater into the ground.
e. Minimize directly connected impervious areas by directing roof, parking lot, and surface flows to pervious/vegetated areas.

Stormwater Management Requirements

As outlined in this section, the District has elected to comply with the requirements of the NPDES General Permit for Waste Discharge Requirements for Stormwater Discharge From Small MS4s (Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ, as amended). The engineer of record is required to determine if a project is subject to the Phase II Small MS4 permit requirements. In addition, a Preliminary Water Quality Technical Report (WQTR) shall be submitted to the District for review and comment at the 50 percent Construction Document Submittal milestone, and the Final WQTR shall be submitted to the District for review and comment at the Division of the State Architect (DSA) Submittal milestone. This section further specifies that the District is responsible for the installation, verification, ongoing implementation, and maintenance of permanent post-construction stormwater management measures (also known as BMPs).

This section additionally specifies that some portions of District projects may be conducted in the City right-of-way (ROW), and that these portions of the project may be required to provide the following documents to the City: (1) City of San Diego Storm Water Requirements Applicability Checklist; (2) City of San Diego Standard Project Storm Water Quality Management Plan (SWQMP) forms; and (3) City of San Diego Priority Development Project SWQMP.

Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan

This section of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual outlines specific requirements for the preparation of Water Pollution Control Plans (WPCPs) and SWPPPs for projects on District properties which are dependent on the size of the project disturbance area. For projects disturbing less than one acre, a WPCP must be developed to manage sediment, materials, waste, and other pollutants in stormwater. Projects disturbing one acre, or more, of soil are subject to the NPDES General Permit For Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction and Land Disturbance Activities (Order WQ 2022-0057-DWQ NPDES No. CAS000002; Construction General Permit). In addition, a SWPPP must be developed to meet Construction General Permit requirements based on the individual project's risk level. SWPPPs prepared for District projects must be:

a. Prepared by a Qualified SWPPP Developer.
b. Aligned with the District SWPPP template for the project size.
c. Tailored to site-specific conditions, including the selection of appropriate BMPs for each construction phase.
d. Submitted at DSA Submittal and finalized prior to bid.

This section additionally states that the project contractor should ensure permit coverage is feasible from a construction management perspective and fully compliant with Construction General Permit requirements. In addition, Water Pollution Control Drawings must be prepared for each phase of construction, which are generally considered to be demolition, grading, land development and utilities, streets and vertical, landscaping and final stabilization.

In addition, during the conceptual phase, a preliminary water balance calculation must be conducted to assess the need for post-construction BMPs in accordance with the District's WQTR template for the Water Balance Calculator. Post-construction BMP types and locations must be refined during design development and construction drawing preparation to account for actual site conditions, and must be done in compliance with the Phase II MS4 permit. The selection, siting, sizing, and operation and maintenance requirements of the post-construction BMPs should be documented in a project-specific WQTR.

General Specifications

Section 2.2 of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes general specifications and product and material data for the construction of District projects. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs. The following general specifications related to hydrology and water quality are anticipated to apply to future projects.

Landscape Standards

The Landscape Standards state that all landscaped areas should be evaluated for potential LID strategies, and that these areas may be used as vegetated swales or bioretention zones. In addition, the Landscape Standards state that stormwater from rooftops and other impervious surfaces should be directed into landscape areas where feasible, soil amendments should be incorporated to improve infiltration, water retention, and overall soil quality, and collected rainwater from cisterns or rain barrels should be used to irrigate portions of the landscape.

3.9.2.5 Local (Non-Regulatory)

City requirements related to water quality are not automatically applicable to projects implemented within District properties. However, in the absence of a District Phase II MS4 permit and as specified in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, the District relies in part on the City's stormwater regulations and programs. Individual projects in City ROW may be required to provide the following documents to the City: (1) City of San Diego Storm Water Requirements Applicability Checklist; (2) City of San Diego Standard Project SWQMP forms; and (3) City of San Diego Priority Development Project SWQMP. As such, a summary of the City's Stormwater Standards is provided below.

City of San Diego Stormwater Standards

The Stormwater Standards are a portion of the City's Land Development Manual that provide information to project applicants on how to comply with the permanent and construction stormwater quality requirements of the City. The Stormwater Standards provide minimum requirements for construction site management, inspection, and maintenance of construction BMPs; monitoring of the weather and implementation of emergency plans as needed; and minimum performance standards, including the following: pollution prevention measures so that there would be no measurable increase of pollution (including sediment) in runoff from the site, no slope erosion, water velocity moving off-site must not be greater than pre-construction levels, and natural hydraulic features and riparian buffers preserved where possible. Although the footprint of the LID BMPs can often fit into planned landscaping features, this requires early planning to ensure that the features are located in places where they can intercept the drainage and safely store the water without adverse effects to adjacent slopes, structures, roadways, or other features. The City's current Stormwater Standards are consistent with the Regional Best Management Practices Design Manual and provide controls for development projects consistent with the City's MS4 permits.

The Stormwater Standards also address "Hydromodification – Limitations on Increases of Runoff Discharge Rates and Durations." Hydromodification management requirements would dictate design elements in locations where downstream channels are susceptible to erosion from increases in stormwater runoff discharge rates and durations. Future development projects proposed within areas draining to San Diego Bay would typically be exempt from hydromodification management requirements because of the location and hardened drainage systems. Exemptions from hydromodification management requirements shall adhere to the current City's Stormwater Standards. Projects discharging into underground storm drains discharging directly to bays or the ocean are also exempt, subject to conditions listed in the City's Stormwater Standards.

3.9.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential hydrology and water quality impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant hydrology and water quality impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality;

2. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin;

3. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:

    a. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site;

    b. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site;

c. Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or

d. Impede or redirect flood flows;

4. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation; or

5. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan.

3.9.4 Impact Analysis

3.9.4.1 Water Quality Standards

Threshold 1: Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Construction

Construction of projects implemented under the CMP could result in short-term impacts to water quality associated with the handling, storage, and disposal of construction materials; maintenance and operation of construction equipment; and earthmoving activities. These activities could result in the discharge of soil or construction materials and fuels due to stormwater runoff. However, all construction-related activities associated with projects implemented under the CMP would be required to comply with the stormwater management and water pollution control requirements in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which have been developed in part to reduce the potential for adverse water quality effects associated with construction activities. See Section 3.9.2.4 above for additional details.

Projects implemented under the CMP that would disturb one acre or more would be required to prepare and submit a Notice of Intent and a SWPPP to the SWRCB demonstrating compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. The Construction General Permit requires that non-stormwater discharges from construction sites be eliminated or reduced to the maximum extent practicable, that a SWPPP be developed governing project construction activities, and that routine inspections of stormwater pollution prevention measures and control practices be performed, including inspections before and after storm events. The specific BMPs required of each future project would be determined during the SWPPP preparation process based on site-specific factors but would generally include measures in the categories of site inspection and maintenance, identification of potential pollutant sources, erosion control/soil stabilization, and post-construction BMPs. Future projects would be required to implement all construction BMPs outlined in the SWPPP to protect downstream water quality and ensure compliance with the Construction General Permit. Upon construction completion, the Construction General Permit permittee for each CMP project would be required to submit a Notice of Termination to the SWRCB or RWQCB to indicate that construction has been completed.

For CMP projects that would disturb less than one acre and therefore not be subject to NPDES Construction General Permit requirements, a WPCP would be required to specify the ways in which the project would manage sediment, materials, waste, and other pollutants in stormwater as specified in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. With the continued implementation of the policies and regulatory requirements outlined in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which include the implementation of erosion and sediment control BMPs, the construction of CMP projects would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality.

Operation

Implementation of the CMP would result in development changes and changes in impervious surface area, which could indirectly increase the total amount of pollutants in stormwater runoff and non-stormwater runoff traveling to on-site drainages and downstream receiving waters, some of which are identified as impaired for certain constituents as discussed in Section 3.9.1.3. In addition, landscaping and other irrigated open spaces associated with the proposed projects under the CMP, when installed, could result in water quality impacts due to uncontrolled irrigation and the use of fertilizers or herbicides. Land uses proposed under the CMP would be similar to existing land uses on campus and, therefore, would not introduce new types of pollutants.

The majority of future projects would be constructed on previously developed sites where the reconfiguration of buildings, hardscape, and landscape could alter drainage patterns but would not substantially increase the amount of pollutant discharge. The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual requires a preliminary water balance calculation to be conducted to determine the need for post-construction BMPs based on existing and proposed site characteristics. Based on this calculation, the selection, siting, sizing, and operation and maintenance requirements of post-construction BMPs that are determined to be applicable must be documented in a project-specific WQTR. The District is responsible for the installation, verification, ongoing implementation, and maintenance of permanent post-construction BMPs across campus.

Specific details related to new campus stormwater BMPs would be developed during required project-level design evaluations. The selected BMPs must demonstrate an ability to reduce pollutant discharges to the maximum extent practicable and comply with applicable discharge prohibitions consistent with the MS4 Phase II program (Order No. 2013-0001-DWQ) standards. To ensure site-specific BMPs are consistent with applicable standards, project-specific details are submitted to a third-party engineer for verification prior to implementation. In addition, the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes the Landscape Standards, which state that all landscaped areas should be evaluated for potential LID strategies, and that these areas may be used as vegetated swales or bioretention zones. The Landscape Standards also state that stormwater from rooftops and other impervious surfaces should be directed into landscape areas where feasible.

With the continued implementation of District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual policies, including the development of project-specific WQTRs to define post-construction BMPs consistent with MS4 regulatory requirements, and the implementation of LID measures for runoff reduction, water quality impacts associated with changes in stormwater runoff would be minimized. As such, operation of projects implemented under the CMP would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality.

Project-Level

Construction of the near-term projects would result in the disturbance of over one acre of land and these projects would therefore be required to prepare and submit a Notice of Intent and a SWPPP to the SWRCB demonstrating compliance with the NPDES Construction General Permit. In addition, Water Pollution Control Drawings would be prepared for each phase of near-term project construction. During the conceptual phase for the near-term projects, a WQTR would be required to be developed in accordance with the District's WQTR format, which would assess the required post-construction BMPs that achieve MS4 Phase II program standards. Once operational, the near-term projects would implement the applicable BMPs and the feasible LID strategies and landscape designs to reduce pollutants within runoff. With implementation of the construction and post-construction requirements outlined in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, in addition to compliance with state and regional standards for water quality and waste discharge requirements, implementation of the near-term projects would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not violate water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.9.4.2 Groundwater Supplies and Recharge

Threshold 2: Would the project substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP would result in a net increase in building area on the Mesa College campus. While the majority of future projects would reconfigure existing development areas, the future projects could result in an increase in impervious surface area across campus, which could interfere with groundwater recharge. However, as discussed in Section 3.9.1.4, the Mesa College campus is not located within a designated groundwater basin. The nearest groundwater basin to the campus is the Mission Valley Groundwater Basin (9-014), which is located approximately three miles southwest of the Mesa College campus and assigned as a Very Low Priority Basin. It is also not designated as a critically overdrafted basin or adjudicated area by the DWR (2020). The project site is not located within a local groundwater recharge area, and therefore the addition of impervious surface area on the campus would not substantially impede groundwater recharge. Nonetheless, LID strategies incorporated into future projects to reduce runoff volume would also allow infiltration.

As discussed in Section 3.6, *Geology and Soils*, the westernmost portion of the project site is underlain by shallow groundwater. If temporary dewatering is required during construction, the District would be required to obtain coverage under the NPDES Groundwater Permit and adhere to applicable permit conditions for discharge. It is anticipated that disposal of groundwater would also occur within the same basin from which the groundwater would be removed, providing the potential for infiltration. However,

no long-term groundwater extraction would occur as a result of CMP implementation. Thus, CMP implementation would not result in a substantial decrease in groundwater recharge or the depletion of groundwater supplies such that the CMP would impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would not be located on the westernmost portion the campus where shallow groundwater is present and would not involve the extraction of groundwater. In addition, the near-term projects would be implemented within the Mesa College campus, which is not within a designated groundwater basin or recharge area. The projects would nonetheless incorporate LID features that allow infiltration. As such, the near-term projects would not result in a substantial decrease in groundwater recharge or the depletion of groundwater supplies such that the sustainable groundwater management of the basin would be impeded.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.9.4.3 Drainage Patterns

Threshold 3: Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite; create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or impede or redirect flood flows?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Additional campus development could alter existing drainage patterns by changing the direction runoff is directed or creating more impervious surfaces such as pavement and buildings where none were before, as impervious surfaces do not allow the percolation of water down into soil. Rather, water is forced directly into storm drain systems or streams, where increases in erosion, siltation, and flood risks can occur. Increases in impervious surface area can also result in exceeding the existing capacity of stormwater facilities if substantial runoff is rerouted or stormwater flow or velocities are substantially increased.

During construction, projects implemented under the CMP would be required to implement the maintenance, inspection, and BMP requirements within a SWPPP or WPCP, which would ensure that construction-period activities do not result in substantial water quality effects related to erosion, siltation, and surface runoff. See Section 3.9.4.1 above for additional information.

The projects proposed under the CMP would not require mass grading or substantial changes in topography on the campus such that major drainage pattern changes would occur in off-site areas, and runoff would continue to drain towards curbs and gutters throughout campus and in adjacent streets, similar to existing conditions. As discussed in Section 3.9.4.1, projects implemented under the CMP would be required to comply with the construction and post-construction requirements outlined in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which include compliance with the Phase II Small MS4 permit standards, preparation of a SWPPP or WPCP, preparation of a WQTR in which post-construction BMPs are identified, and the integration of LID concepts into project-design to reduce runoff and increase water retention. The preparation of preliminary water balance calculations would determine whether individual projects on campus would alter runoff in a manner that requires alterations to the locations, sizes, or types of BMPs in the project vicinity, or whether new drainage features can connect to existing BMPs. New BMPs or alterations to existing BMPs required for each project would be documented in a WQTR and installed during project construction. While the types and locations of BMPs may be adjusted to accommodate future campus development, the overall quantity of runoff is not anticipated to substantially increase given that the majority of future projects would be constructed on previously developed sites where impervious surfaces occur under existing conditions. Compliance with these requirements would ensure that projects implemented under the CMP do not result in substantial erosion, siltation, runoff, or the exceedance of capacity of stormwater drainage systems as drainage changes occur.

In addition, the project site is not located within a 100-year flood zone and would not result in the redirection of flood flows as described further in Section 3.9.4.4 below. As the project would not result in a substantial change in the drainage patterns of the site and would install BMPs to manage runoff where such changes would occur, the project would not result in substantial erosion, a substantial increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff such that flooding would occur, exceedance of stormwater infrastructure capacity, or flood flow alterations.

Project-Level

Both of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would alter impervious surfaces on the Mesa College campus. However, these projects would not require mass grading or substantial changes in topography on their respective project sites such that off-site drainage pattern changes are anticipated. Each of these projects would be required to implement the construction and post-construction requirements outlined in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual and described under the program-level analysis above, including preparation of water balance calculations to determine where post-construction BMPs are needed and the appropriate sizing. LID concepts are also required to be integrated into the design of each near-term project to reduce runoff and increase water retention. Implementation of these District requirements would ensure that the near-term projects do not result in a substantial increase in erosion, siltation, or runoff, or exceed the capacity of existing stormwater drainage systems. As discussed previously, the campus is not within a 100-year flood zone. As the near-term projects would implement BMPs to capture, treat, and discharge runoff based on proposed changes in the drainage patterns of the sites, they would not result in substantial erosion, a substantial increase in the rate or amount of surface runoff such that flooding would occur, exceedance of stormwater infrastructure capacity, or flood flow alterations.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not alter the existing drainage pattern of the area in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation, flooding, exceedance of stormwater drainage system capacity, increased polluted runoff, or redirection of flood flows. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.9.4.4 Inundation

Threshold 4: Would the project, in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Tsunamis are typically generated by seismic activity, which causes displacement of the ocean floor, resulting in large waves at the coast. Seiches are large waves generated in enclosed bodies of water in response to ground shaking. A drainage channel that parallels Genesee Avenue on the western edge of the project site flows southeast toward Tecolote Canyon; however, campus buildings are at an elevation higher than this channel, and it is not an enclosed body of water. The nearest enclosed body of water that could generate a seiche is Lake Murray, which is located approximately 6.7 miles southeast of the campus. Therefore, it would not result in inundation of the campus in the unlikely event of a seiche. The nearest coastal area to the project site is the Pacific Ocean, located approximately 4.8 miles to the west. The project site is not located within a mapped tsunami hazard area (Ninyo & Moore 2026; Appendix F). As a result, tsunamis and seiches are not considered a potential hazard to future projects on the Mesa College campus.

As described in Section 3.9.1.5, the project site is mapped within Zone X on FEMA's FIRM for the project area (FEMA 2012). Therefore, the project site is not within a 100-year flood zone or a 500-year flood zone and is not anticipated to be at risk of inundation. The nearest Special Flood Hazard Area to the project site occurs west of Genesee Avenue within Tecolote Canyon. Further, as described in Section 3.8, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, small quantities of hazardous materials may be used on campus but would be required to be stored in accordance with applicable regulations intended to prevent the accidental release of such materials. Therefore, in the unlikely event of flooding at the project site, projects implemented under the CMP would not result in a substantial risk of the release of pollutants.

Project-Level

As stated under the program-level analysis above, the Mesa College campus is not within a tsunami or seiche hazard zone, or within a 100-year flood zone that is anticipated to be at risk of inundation. As the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would occur within the boundaries of the Mesa College campus, the near-term projects would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.9.4.5 Water Quality and Groundwater Management Plans

Threshold 5: Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The water quality control plan applicable to the project site is the Basin Plan described in Section 3.9.2.3 above, which designates beneficial uses and water quality objectives for ground and surface waters in the San Diego region. At the individual project level, compliance with RWQCB permits and objectives through the implementation of a SWPPP and implementation of identified BMPs during operation of projects implemented under the CMP would ensure that these projects do not conflict with or obstruct the implementation of the Basin Plan. In addition, the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes requirements that individual projects are required to implement during construction and operation to protect water quality and apply LID techniques (refer to Section 3.9.4.1 for additional details). Adherence to these District requirements consistent with SWRCB and RWQCB permit programs would ensure that individual projects implemented under the CMP would be consistent with the objectives outlined in the Basin Plan.

As discussed in Section 3.9.1.4, the Mesa College campus is not located within a designated groundwater basin and the nearest groundwater basin to the campus (Mission Valley Groundwater Basin) is assigned a Very Low Priority Basin. Thus, no sustainable groundwater management plan applies to this basin and the CMP would not result in conflicts with a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Project-Level

The near-term projects implemented under the CMP would be required to implement the state, regional, and District requirements related to water quality during construction and operation as outlined under the program-level analysis above. Adherence to these requirements would ensure that the near-term projects are consistent with the objectives in the Basin Plan for water quality. In addition, as the near-term projects would be located within the Mesa College campus, they would not be located within a designated groundwater basin with an applicable sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, implementation of the near-term projects would not result in conflicts with a sustainable groundwater management plan.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.9.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Cumulative impacts would result if modifications to a portion of a watershed or water pollution produced by development were to affect other water bodies in the watershed, as lands and water bodies within a watershed are part of an interrelated hydrologic system. The geographic scope for analysis of cumulative impacts related to hydrology and water quality is the Los Peñasquitos HU.

3.9.5.1 Water Quality Standards

Cumulative development projects would require conformance with regulatory requirements related to water quality, such as the NPDES Construction General Permit for projects disturbing one or more acres, the City's requirement for preparation of a WPCP for projects disturbing under one acre, and NPDES requirements for implementation of post-construction BMPs. Depending on the uses proposed by cumulative projects, other general permit types issued by the SWRCB or RWQCB may also apply for point source pollutants. Similar to the proposed CMP, compliance with the applicable state, regional, and local requirements would ensure that projects within the Los Peñasquitos HU do not violate water quality standards. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to water quality standards would be **less than significant**.

3.9.5.2 Groundwater Supplies and Recharge

The cumulative development projects proposed within the Los Peñasquitos HU could increase the amount of impervious surface area on their respective project sites and reduce groundwater infiltration. However, similar to the CMP, the cumulative development projects would not be located within a groundwater basin that is designated as medium or high priority and has a sustainable groundwater management plan as there are no groundwater basins within the Los Peñasquitos HU that are designated as medium or high priority. Therefore, the increase in impervious surface area that could occur is not anticipated to substantially impede groundwater recharge. As such, cumulative impacts related to groundwater supplies and recharge would be **less than significant**.

3.9.5.3 Drainage Patterns

Cumulative development projects could potentially alter the existing drainage patterns at their respective project sites. However, similar to the projects proposed under the CMP, these cumulative development projects would be required to comply with relevant permits and regulations related to stormwater runoff, erosion, siltation, and system capacity implemented by the SWRCB, RWQCB, and City. As such, cumulative impacts to related to the alteration of drainage patterns would be **less than significant**.

3.9.5.4 Inundation

Cumulative development projects could be located in flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones and therefore could result in a cumulative increase in the risk of release of pollutants due to inundation. However, tsunamis, seiches, and floods are localized events and cumulative projects would not increase the likelihood of their occurrence or result in increased exposure to these events. In addition, projects that are located within these inundation hazard zones would be required to comply with storage regulations and permit requirements developed for the purpose of reducing the risk of pollutant release. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to the risk of release of pollutants due to cumulative project inundation would be **less than significant**.

3.9.5.5 Water Quality and Groundwater Management Plans

Cumulative development projects would be subject to the goals and policies identified within the Basin Plan, similar to projects proposed under the CMP. There are ten watershed WQIPs in the San Diego Region, which each include descriptions of the highest priority pollutants or conditions in a specific watershed, goals and strategies to address those pollutants or conditions, and time schedules associated with those goals and strategies (RWQCB 2026). Of these ten, applicable WQIPs for the cumulative analysis area (Los Peñasquitos HU) include the Los Peñasquitos and Mission Bay WQIPs. Similar to the CMP, cumulative development projects would be required to comply with these plans, as applicable at the project level, which generally is equivalent to adherence to the regulatory permit programs administered by the SWRCB and RWQCB. As described above, there are no medium or high priority groundwater basins within the Los Peñasquitos HU and the cumulative development projects would not be subject to a sustainable groundwater management plan. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to water quality and groundwater management plans would be **less than significant**.

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3.10 Land Use and Planning

This section addresses the potential land use and planning impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to land use and planning are also addressed.

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

3.10.1.1 Project Setting and Land Uses

The Mesa College campus is located in the southeastern portion of the Clairemont Mesa community, on an approximately 106-acre mesa. The City of San Diego (City) General Plan designates the land use for the Mesa College campus as Institutional & Public and Semi-Public Facilities. In the CMP, the campus is generally assigned the zoning designations of Instructional, Student Support, Athletics, and Parking, though these categories are intentionally broad to allow for mixing of uses to best serve campus populations.

On the campus, the majority of the buildings are clustered on the upper level of the mesa and the mid to lower portions of campus are dedicated to athletic fields, additional instructional buildings, and parking. The campus currently hosts approximately 50 permanent buildings, containing approximately 1.3 million gross square feet (GSF) and 590,000 assignable square feet. Three 960-GSF temporary classroom buildings are currently located at the southwest corner of Parking Lot 1.

3.10.1.2 Surrounding Setting and Land Uses

The Mesa College campus is located within the Clairemont Mesa community of the City, which is generally bordered by State Route (SR) 52 on the north, the community of Linda Vista on the south, I-5 on the west, and Interstate (I-) 805 on the east. Mesa College occurs in the southeastern corner of the Clairemont Mesa community and the community of Linda Vista borders campus to the south. Clairemont Mesa is a suburban community characterized by single-family homes generally confined to the mesas formed by surrounding canyons and hillsides. Mesa College is generally surrounded by a mix of single-family and multi-family residential uses and on two sides by the Tecolote Canyon nature preserve. According to the Clairemont Mesa Community Plan, land uses surrounding the campus include Residential Low 2 (10-15 dwelling units per acre) to the north and northeast, Residential Medium 1 (30-44 dwelling units per acre) and Residential Medium 2 (45-55 dwelling units per acre) to the east, and Resource Based Parks followed by Residential Low 2 (10-15 dwelling units per acre) to the west (City 2025). According to the Linda Vista Community Plan, the land use to the south of campus is designated as Open Space (City 1998).

3.10.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to land use and planning is provided below. No federal regulations regarding land use and planning apply to the project.

3.10.2.1 State

California Planning and Zoning Law

The legal framework in which California's cities and counties exercise local planning and land use functions is provided in the California Planning and Zoning Law (Government Code Sections 65000 through 66499.58). Under this state planning law, each city and county must adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan. State law gives cities and counties wide latitude in how they create a general plan, but there are fundamental requirements that must be met. These requirements involve the inclusion of nine mandatory elements described in the Government Code: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, safety, environmental justice, and air quality. Only cities and counties that have identified disadvantaged communities must address environmental justice, including air quality, in their general plans. Additional elements may be added at the discretion of individual jurisdictions when preparing their general plan. Each of the elements sets forth objectives, principles, standards, policies, and plan proposals related to the element's topic.

However, as discussed further in relation to Assembly Bill (AB) 648 below, student, faculty, and staff housing projects are exempt from the local zoning regulations of the City. In addition, pursuant to Government Code Section 53094, local City zoning is not applicable to community college projects that enhance the District's ability to provide classroom education. As such, the CMP, rather than a city or county general plan, provides the applicable land use guidance for development within the Mesa College campus.

Assembly Bill 648

AB 648 added Section 81055 to the California Education Code to exempt the construction of university housing development projects, as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.58, from the local zoning regulations of a city, county, or city and county when such projects are constructed on property owned or leased by a community college district. To meet the requirements of Education Code Section 81055, an off-campus housing project must be located within 0.5 mile of a main campus, or within 0.5 mile of a satellite campus that existed before July 1, 2025. For housing projects including faculty or staff units, a portion of the units must be made available at rents affordable to extremely low income and lower income faculty and staff.

Senate Bill 375

As described further in Section 3.7.2.2, Senate Bill (SB) 375 requires coordination of land use planning, regional transportation plans (RTPs), and funding priorities to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from passenger vehicle travel within each Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning area. As it pertains to land use planning, each MPO must create a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) to achieve its regional GHG emissions reduction goal through the development of more compact, complete, and efficient communities. For the project area, the San Diego Association of Government's (SANDAG's) 2025 Regional Plan achieves the requirements of SB 375.

3.10.2.2 Regional

San Diego Association of Governments Regional Plan

The SANDAG 2025 Regional Plan was adopted by the SANDAG Board of Directors on December 12, 2025, and includes the region's RTP/SCS, as required by SB 375, and Regional Comprehensive Plan (SANDAG 2025). The 2025 Regional Plan provides a long-term blueprint for the San Diego region that seeks to meet regulatory requirements, address traffic congestion, and create equal access to jobs, education, healthcare, and other community resources. The SCS describes coordinated transportation and land use planning strategies that exceed the state's target for reducing per capita GHG emissions set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The 2025 Regional Plan identifies various transit and mobility projects surrounding the Mesa College campus, such as the Regional Bike Plan which would extend along Marlesta Drive north of campus, and the Arterial Rapid Route 241 bus route along Genessee Avenue west of campus. Housing and job growth is anticipated in the area surrounding the campus for both 2035 and 2050 (SANDAG 2025).

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan

The San Diego Regional Airport Authority (SDCRAA) serves as the Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) for San Diego County (County). The SDCRAA is responsible for adopting Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs) for 16 public use and military airports in San Diego County. ALUCPs provide guidance on appropriate land uses surrounding airports to protect the health and safety of people and property within the vicinity of an airport, as well as the public in general. An ALUCP contains policies and criteria that address compatibility between airports and the future land uses that surround them in the areas of noise, overflight, safety, and airspace protection, in order to minimize the public's exposure to hazards within the Airport Influence Area (AIA) for each airport.

Each AIA is divided into two review areas. Review Area 1 is defined by the combination of the 60 decibel (dB) Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) noise contour, the outer boundary of all safety zones, and the airspace. Review Area 1 consists of locations where noise or safety concerns may necessitate limitations on the types of land use actions, and all compatibility policies and standards in the ALUCP apply. Review Area 2 is defined by the combination of the airspace protection and overflight boundaries beyond Review Area 1, and only airspace protection and overflight policies and standards apply. The SDCRAA has no jurisdiction over the operation of airports or over existing land uses, regardless of whether or not such uses are incompatible with airport activities. Once ALUCPs have been adopted, local agencies with land located within the AIA boundary for any of the airports must, by law, amend their planning documents to conform to the applicable ALUCP. The Mesa College campus is within the AIA (Review Area 2) of the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport, and within the Overflight Area Boundary and AIA associated with San Diego International Airport.

3.10.2.3 District

Mesa College Comprehensive Master Plan

The CMP was approved by the District Board of Trustees on May 13, 2021, and is the ten-year educational and facilities master plan for Mesa College. The CMP provides the applicable land use guidance for development within the Mesa College campus. See Section 2.0, *Project Description*, for additional information.

3.10.2.4 Local (Non-Regulatory)

The City has numerous policies, programs, codes, and ordinances that regulate land use development. The following sections focus on the City's plans that affect land use designations and zoning. However, pursuant to Government Code Section 53094, local City zoning is not applicable to community college projects that enhance the District's ability to provide classroom education. As the CMP would occur adjacent to properties within the City and the District aims to provide land uses compatible with surrounding development, a summary of the City's General Plan and the Clairemont Community Plan, focusing on policies relevant to the CMP, are included below.

City of San Diego General Plan

An update to the City General Plan was adopted in 2024, building off of the City of Villages strategy, which was first adopted as part of the Strategic Framework Element of the City's 2002 General Plan. The Strategic Framework Element represented the City's new approach for shaping how the City would grow while attempting to preserve the character of its communities, natural resources, and amenities. Under the City of Villages strategy, the General Plan aims to direct new development projects away from natural, undeveloped lands into already urbanized areas and/or areas where conditions allow the integration of housing, employment, civic, and transit uses. It is a development strategy that mirrors regional planning and smart growth principles intended to preserve remaining open space and natural habitat and focus development in areas with available public infrastructure. The City General Plan is developed to provide a structure to guide future community plan updates and amendments, which provide localized land use plans for the City.

Clairemont Community Plan

The Clairemont Mesa Community Plan was adopted in 1989 and last updated in December 2025 (City 2025). The Clairemont Community Plan update includes an updated vision and strategy to guide the future growth and development within the Clairemont community in the City over the next 30 or more years. The Clairemont Community Plan aligns with the City's 2024 General Plan land use framework and City of Villages land use strategy as well as the policy direction of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP). The updated Clairemont Community Plan includes a focus on retail and employment centers, residential areas, parks and public spaces, and bus rapid and light rail stations, and envisions a mobility network that serves vehicles and encourages walking, bicycling, and transit use. The following policy within the Clairemont Community Plan is relevant to Mesa College:

Policy 3.17 Eliminate gaps in bicycle network, with a focus on key connections such as a bikeway linking Morena Boulevard and Santa Fe Street and another bikeway traversing Mesa College Circle, which will require coordination with San Diego Mesa College.

3.10.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential land use and planning impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant land use and planning impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Physically divide an established community; or

2. Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

3.10.4 Impact Analysis

3.10.4.1 Community Division

Threshold 1: Would the project physically divide an established community?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would occur within the boundaries of the existing campus, other than connections to existing utilities adjacent to campus and circulation alterations at the campus entrances. Circulation improvements outside of the campus boundary would alter entrances to campus but would not change existing access to surrounding residential and open space land uses. The CMP would include circulation improvements across campus such as pedestrian connections and bicycle paths, which would improve connections within the campus but would not affect connectivity of the surrounding community. As no major development would occur outside of the established campus boundaries, implementation of the CMP would not physically divide an established community.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be implemented within the boundaries of the Mesa College campus on their respective project sites, and would not include development outside of the established campus boundaries. No intrusion into or division of the surrounding residential communities or open space areas would occur. The near-term projects would not physically divide an established community.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

The CMP, including the near-term projects, would not physically divide an established community. **No program-level or project-level impact would occur**. No mitigation is required.

3.10.4.2 Land Use Plans, Policies, and Regulations

Threshold 2: Would the project cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

Impact Discussion

Pursuant to Government Code Section 53094, local City zoning is not applicable to community college projects that enhance the District's ability to provide classroom education. As such, the CMP provides the applicable land use guidance for development within the Mesa College campus and is further analyzed below. The CMP is the applicable campus land use plan, as the District is the only agency with local land use jurisdiction over campus projects. Nevertheless, additional land use plans which would

apply to the areas adjacent to the campus have been reviewed for this analysis where relevant to campus development.

Program-Level

Mesa College Comprehensive Master Plan

As discussed further in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, the CMP is the ten-year educational and facilities master plan for Mesa College and is the applicable land use plan for the campus. The fundamental purpose of the CMP is to guide the orderly and coordinated development of the Mesa College campus to achieve District and campus program goals, including the single long-term campus goal to be the leading college of equity and excellence. The CMP includes designs and concepts for improvements and facility projects that are conceptual and intended to serve as a framework for the future detailed design of campus improvements as funding becomes available. The CMP establishes planning assumptions for future campus development based on projected enrollment and staffing needs. In addition to the projected student growth rate, facilities planning is based on the unique space needs of the programs that are lacking space or are most likely to grow. In the CMP, areas of the Mesa College campus are generally assigned the zoning designations of Instructional, Student Support, Athletics, or Parking.

While the CMP is the applicable land use planning document for Mesa College, it is a programmatic planning document rather than a plan adopted specifically for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect under CEQA. This PEIR provides environmental review for the CMP under CEQA and discusses potential environmental effects of the project, considering where applicable those plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. Projects implemented under the CMP would be required to comply with the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which provides District policies for design professionals and construction teams as well as the District Sustainability Levels framework that is designed to recognize, measure, and promote sustainable practices across District campuses and facilities. Future development projects that implement the CMP would be reviewed and approved at the appropriate level of the District and such review would involve verification of conformance with applicable regulations that protect environmental resources as well as review for consistency with the environmental analysis within this PEIR. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

City of San Diego General Plan and Clairemont Community Plan

Although the District is not subject to local land use planning documents such as the General Plan or community plans, the District strives to maintain consistency with local land use plans where feasible. The General Plan aims to direct new development projects into urbanized areas where a mix of uses occur and public infrastructure is available. Although the General Plan includes policies related to education facilities, it does not specifically address the District or Mesa College. However, the CMP would generally align with the principles of the General Plan by increasing density within the previously developed campus boundaries rather than expanding into undeveloped areas. The Mesa College campus is mapped as an Institutional land use in the Clairemont Community Plan and would continue this land use with project implementation.

The Clairemont Community Plan includes Policy 3.17, which identifies a policy to “[e]liminate gaps in bicycle network, with a focus on key connections such as a bikeway linking Morena Boulevard and Santa

Fe Street and another bikeway traversing Mesa College Circle, which will require coordination with San Diego Mesa College." The CMP anticipates roadway improvements to add a bike path and parking along the southern loop of Mesa College Circle, which would align with this policy. As this policy states, the District would need to coordinate with the City on this project where the proposed bike path would require connections to existing and/or planned bike paths in the City right-of-way (ROW) adjacent to the Mesa College campus. Overall, the CMP would be generally consistent with the goals and policies within the City General Plan and Clairemont Community Plan.

SANDAG Regional Plan

The SANDAG Regional Plan is a long-range plan for transportation, land use, housing, and the environmental needs of the San Diego region through the year 2050. The goals of the 2025 Regional Plan include convenient and reliable movement of people and goods; equitable access to essential needs and opportunities; healthy communities and environment for everyone; and safe transportation network for all users (SANDAG 2025). The CMP would support the goals and objectives of SANDAG's 2025 Regional Plan by implementing improvements to pedestrian and bicycle mobility on campus. In addition, the CMP would include the development of on-campus housing which would reduce student commuter trips. Specific transit and mobility projects identified in the 2025 Regional Plan for implementation near campus would provide increased alternative transportation options for students and staff; the CMP would not interfere with implementation of these projects by SANDAG or other agencies. Therefore, the CMP would be consistent with the 2025 Regional Plan.

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans

As discussed in Section 3.10.2.2, the entirety of the Mesa College campus is within Review Area 2 of the AIA associated with Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (SDCRAA 2010) and is within the Overflight Area Boundary and AIA associated with San Diego International Airport (SDCRAA 2025). However, the project site is not within the noise exposure or safety zone contours for these airports (SDCRAA 2010; SDCRAA 2025).

AIA Review Area 2 of the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport establishes limits on the heights of structures, particularly in areas of high terrain, and the recordation of overflight notification documents. In accordance with the Review Area 2 requirements in the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport ALUCP, a land use action proposed under the CMP would be required to undergo ALUC review if it (1) received a final notice of determination from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that the project would constitute a hazard or obstruction to air navigation; (2) would potentially penetrate protected airspace surfaces or otherwise meet applicable review criteria, including structures with heights exceeding 35 feet above ground level; (3) has the potential to create electrical or visual hazards to aircraft in flight; or (4) the potential to cause an increase in the attraction of birds or other wildlife that can be hazardous to aircraft operations (SDCRAA 2010). If any of these would apply to individual projects proposed under the CMP, the District, as the local agency, would be required to coordinate with the ALUC for determination of consistency with the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport ALUCP.

The AIA associated with San Diego International Airport is defined as the area encompassed by the outermost boundaries of the combined safety zones, 60 dB CNEL noise contour, airspace protection area, and overflight area, within which the policies and standards of the ALUCP apply. The Mesa College campus is not located within the safety zones, 60 dB CNEL noise contour, or airspace protection area, but is located within the Overflight Area Boundary. Projects proposed within the overflight area would be subject to the overflight compatibility policies outlined within the ALUCP, which require local

agencies to notify owners of newly constructed dwelling units about the potential effects of aircraft overflight (SDCRAA 2025). The District would own the residential projects implemented on the Mesa College campus, but would provide disclosure of aircraft noise to future tenants as required by the ALUCP.

As the projects implemented under the CMP would comply with the relevant policies outlined in the ALUCPs for the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport and the San Diego International Airport, the CMP would be consistent with these ALUCPs.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be implemented as part of the development proposed in the CMP, which is discussed under the program-level analysis above. In addition, the near-term projects would be developed entirely within the boundaries of the Mesa College campus, over which the District has land use authority, and therefore would not be required to demonstrate consistency with the General Plan or Clairemont Community Plan. As the near-term projects would be developed to accommodate regional growth that is accounted for in the 2025 Regional Plan, the near-term projects would be consistent with SANDAG's 2025 Regional Plan. In addition, the near-term projects would be required to comply with FAA regulations and ALUCP policies for the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport and the San Diego International Airport as outlined under the program-level analysis above. Implementation of the near-term projects would not result in a conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

The CMP, including the near-term projects, would not cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with a land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.10.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Land uses and development patterns are typically established in local land use planning documents specific to jurisdictions but can have implications on surrounding areas. The geographic scope for the land use cumulative analysis is the City of San Diego.

3.10.5.1 Community Division

Cumulative development projects proposed within the City would likely occur within individual properties or connected groups of properties and are not anticipated to divide established communities as the City is largely developed with existing development, circulation features, and dedicated open space defining locations with the potential for further development. In addition, cumulative development projects would be evaluated for compliance with existing zoning and land use planning documents established by the City and it is anticipated that the City would require minimization efforts to prevent impacts related to community division. Therefore, cumulative impacts of the CMP, in combination with cumulative development projects, related to the physical division of an established community would be **less than significant**.

3.10.5.2 Land Use Plans, Policies, and Regulations

Cumulative development projects within the City would be evaluated for compliance with the City's General Plan, the applicable community plan, and applicable policies and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects. Projects that are not consistent with existing land use designations would require approval of a General Plan and/or Community Plan amendment and would require environmental review under CEQA. Projects that require a land use plan amendment are required to demonstrate conformance with pertinent goals, policies, and recommendations. Where significant or potentially significant environmental impacts are identified, implementation of feasible mitigation would be required to reduce or avoid significant land use impacts. Nonetheless, the environmental effects of future projects could remain significant. The project would not conflict with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. As such, while significant cumulative impacts related to consistency with the land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect could occur due to future development within the City, the CMP contribution to such impacts **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

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3.11 Noise

This section addresses the potential noise impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to noise are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analysis in the Noise Technical Report (HELIX 2026), provided as Appendix H to the PEIR.

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

3.11.1.1 Noise Descriptors and Terminology

Noise Descriptors

All noise level or sound level values presented are expressed in terms of decibels (dB), with A weighting (dBA) to approximate the hearing sensitivity of humans. Time-averaged noise levels are expressed by the symbol L_{EQ}, with a specified duration. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is a 24-hour average, where noise levels during the evening hours of 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. have an added 5 dBA weighting, and noise levels during the nighttime hours of 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. have an added 10 dBA weighting. Sound levels expressed in CNEL are always based on dBA. These metrics are used to express noise levels for both measurement and municipal regulations, as well as for land use guidelines and enforcement of noise ordinances.

Noise Terminology

Sound, Noise and Acoustics

Sound can be described as the mechanical energy of a vibrating object transmitted by pressure waves through a liquid or gaseous medium (e.g., air) to a hearing organ, such as a human ear. Noise is defined as loud, unexpected, or annoying sound. In the science of acoustics, the fundamental model consists of a sound (or noise) source, a receiver, and the propagation path between the two. The loudness of the noise source and obstructions or atmospheric factors affecting the propagation path to the receiver determine the sound level and characteristics of the noise perceived by the receiver. The field of acoustics deals primarily with the propagation and control of sound.

Frequency

Continuous sound can be described by frequency (pitch) and amplitude (loudness). A low-frequency sound is perceived as low in pitch. Frequency is expressed in terms of cycles per second, or Hertz (Hz) (e.g., a frequency of 250 cycles per second is referred to as 250 Hz). High frequencies are sometimes more conveniently expressed in kilohertz, or thousands of Hertz. The audible frequency range for humans is generally between 20 Hz and 20,000 Hz.

Sound Pressure Levels and Decibels

The amplitude of pressure waves generated by a sound source determines the loudness of that source. Sound pressure amplitude is measured in micro-Pascals (µPa). One µPa is approximately one hundred billionth (0.00000000001) of normal atmospheric pressure. Sound pressure amplitudes for different kinds of noise environments can range from less than 100 to 100,000,000 µPa. Because of this wide range of values, sound is rarely expressed in terms of µPa. Instead, a logarithmic scale is used to

describe sound pressure level (SPL) in terms of dBA. The threshold of hearing for the human ear is about 0 dBA, which corresponds to 20 µPa.

Addition of Decibels

Because decibels are logarithmic units, SPL cannot be added or subtracted through standard arithmetic. Under the decibel scale, a doubling of sound energy corresponds to a 3 dBA increase. In other words, when two identical sources are each producing sound of the same loudness, the resulting sound level at a given distance would be 3 dBA higher than from one source under the same conditions. For example, if one automobile produces an SPL of 70 dBA when it passes an observer, two cars passing simultaneously would not produce 140 dBA – rather, they would combine to produce 73 dBA. Under the decibel scale, three sources of equal loudness together produce a sound level 5 dBA louder than one source.

Under controlled conditions in an acoustical laboratory, the trained, healthy human ear can discern 1 dBA changes in sound levels when exposed to steady, single-frequency ("pure-tone") signals in the mid-frequency (1,000 Hz to 8,000 Hz) range. In typical noisy environments, changes in noise of 1 to 2 dBA are generally not perceptible. It is widely accepted, however, that people begin to detect sound level increases of 3 dBA in typical noisy environments. Further, a 5 dBA increase is generally perceived as a distinctly noticeable increase, and a 10 dBA increase is generally perceived as a doubling of loudness.

No known studies have directly correlated the ability of a healthy human ear to discern specific levels of change in traffic noise over a 24-hour period. Many ordinances, however, specify a change of 3 CNEL as the significant impact threshold. This is based on the concept of a doubling in noise energy resulting in a 3 dBA change in noise, which is the amount of change in noise necessary for the increase to be perceptible to the average healthy human ear.

3.11.1.2 Ground-borne Vibration Descriptors and Terminology

Ground-borne vibration consists of rapidly fluctuating motions or waves transmitted through the ground with an average motion of zero. The rumbling sound caused by the vibration of room surfaces due to ground-borne vibration is called ground-borne noise. Ground-borne noise is highly dependent on the characteristics of the structure subject to vibration. Therefore, this analysis focuses on ground-borne vibrations. Sources of ground-borne vibrations include natural phenomena and anthropogenic causes (e.g., explosions, machinery, traffic, trains, construction equipment). Vibration sources may be continuous (e.g., factory machinery) or transient (e.g., explosions).

Peak particle velocity (PPV) is defined as the maximum instantaneous positive or negative peak of the vibration wave. Decibels are also used to compress the range of numbers required to describe vibration. A vibration velocity level (L_V) with units of VdB (referenced to one-micro-inch per second velocity) is commonly used in evaluating human reactions to vibrations as it describes the "smoothed" vibration amplitude. For the purposes of this analysis, L_V with units of VdB is used to evaluate construction-generated vibration for building damage and human reactions.

3.11.1.3 Noise and Vibration Sensitive Land Uses

Noise-sensitive land uses (NSLUs) are land uses that may be subject to stress and/or interference from excessive noise, such as residential dwellings, schools, transient lodging (hotels), hospitals, educational facilities, and libraries. Industrial and commercial land uses are generally not considered sensitive to

noise. Noise receptors are individual locations that may be affected by noise. The closest existing NSLUs to the campus include the single-family residences to the north and east of campus and the multi-family residential building to the east of campus, as well as the existing classroom buildings throughout campus. In addition, the CMP would include the construction of additional classroom buildings and student housing, which would also be considered NSLUs.

Land uses in which ground-borne vibration could potentially interfere with operations or equipment, such as research, hospitals, and university research operations (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2020), are considered "vibration-sensitive." The degree of sensitivity depends on the specific equipment that would be affected by the ground-borne vibration. In addition, excessive levels of ground-borne vibration of either a regular or an intermittent nature can result in annoyance to residential uses, schools, or transient lodging. Land uses in the vicinity of campus that are subject to annoyance from vibration include the residences described as NSLUs above. In addition, on-campus vibration-sensitive land uses include the existing Math and Science Complex (Building MS) and Allied Health Education (Building S) buildings, which contain vibration-sensitive laboratory and medical imaging equipment. The proposed community clinic may be a future vibration-sensitive land use constructed on campus; its sensitivity would depend on the final equipment and uses involved in the clinic.

3.11.1.4 Existing Noise Environment

The existing noise environment on campus is dominated by traffic noise from internal campus roadways such as Mesa College Circle, external streets, noise from recreation uses on campus such as tennis courts and athletic fields, and typical college campus noise (e.g., landscape maintenance equipment, students and faculty speaking, etc.). There is some noise from small aircraft overflights in the project area, mostly associated with the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport, which is located approximately one mile northeast of the campus. However, the campus is outside of the noise contours associated with the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (San Diego County Regional Airport Authority [SDCRAA] 2010).

Noise Survey

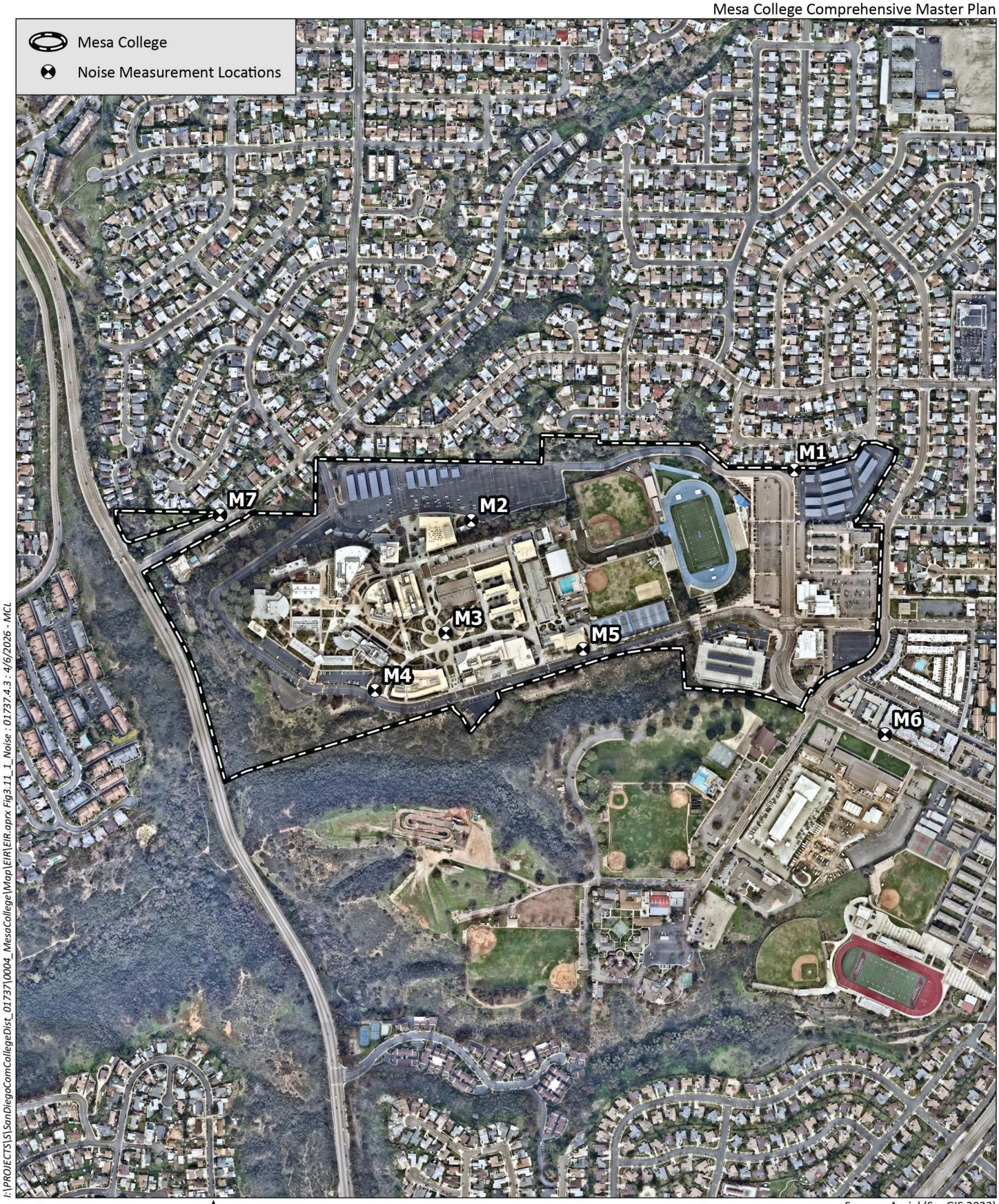
Seven short-term (15-minute) noise measurements were taken on or near the campus to document ambient noise conditions in the vicinity. Traffic counts were taken during measurements along roadways (measurements 6 and 7) for passenger cars, medium trucks, buses, and heavy trucks that passed by the noise meter during the measurement. The measured noise levels and traffic counts, as applicable, are shown in Table 3.11-1, *Noise Measurement Results.* Measurement locations are shown on Figure 3.11-1, *Noise Measurement Locations*. Noise levels recorded on campus ranged from 51.4 to 66.8 dBA L_{EQ}.

Table 3.11-1
NOISE MEASUREMENT RESULTS

Measurement 1	
Date:	September 30, 2025
Time:	10:21 a.m. – 10:36 a.m.
Location:	North side of the entrance to Lot 2, 50 feet northeast of Mesa College Circle.
Measured Noise Level:	54.0 dBA L_{EQ}
Primary Noise Source(s):	Primarily traffic noise on internal streets, occasional light aircraft overflight, perceptible noise from baseball field.

Measurement 2	
Date:	September 30, 2025
Time:	10:50 a.m. – 11:05 a.m.
Location:	Southern edge of Lot 1, 120 feet east of Student Services Center (Building I4).
Measured Noise Level:	53.3 dBA L_{EQ}
Primary Noise Source(s):	Primarily traffic noise on internal streets, occasional light aircraft overflight.
Measurement 3	
Date:	September 30, 2025
Time:	11:13 a.m. – 11:28 a.m.
Location:	Mesa Commons (Building MC) Quad, 110 feet south of Building K1 which contains classrooms.
Measured Noise Level:	52.6 dBA L_{EQ}
Primary Noise Source(s):	Noise associated with students and faculty walking and talking, minimal light aircraft overflight.
Measurement 4	
Date:	September 30, 2025
Time:	11:36 a.m. – 11:51 a.m.
Location:	50 feet east of Lot 8 entrance and 80 feet west of Center for Business and Technology (Building BT), north side of Mesa College Circle.
Measured Noise Level:	51.4 dBA L_{EQ}
Primary Noise Source(s):	Primarily traffic noise on internal streets, occasional light aircraft overflight.
Measurement 5	
Date:	September 30, 2025
Time:	12:04 p.m. – 12:19 p.m.
Location:	10 feet south of Exercise Science building (Building ES) and 75 feet west of tennis courts, north side of Mesa College Circle.
Measured Noise Level:	53.9 dBA L_{EQ}
Primary Noise Source(s):	Primarily traffic noise on internal streets, students walking by, and tennis court use.
Measurement 6	
Date:	September 30, 2025
Time:	12:38 p.m. – 12:53 p.m.
Location:	Northeast side of Mesa College Drive, 45 feet from roadway centerline. 15 feet from the Villa Mesa Apartments and 425 feet southeast of Lot 5.
Measured Noise Level:	64.7 dBA L_{EQ}
Primary Noise Source(s):	Primarily traffic noise associated with Mesa College Drive.
Traffic Count:	453 cars; 1 medium truck, 2 buses, 0 heavy trucks.
Measurement 7	
Date:	September 30, 2025
Time:	1:07 p.m. – 1:22 p.m.
Location:	North side of Marlesta Drive, 30 feet from roadway centerline. 560 feet southeast of campus entrance at Chasewood Way.
Measured Noise Level:	66.8 dBA L_{EQ}
Primary Noise Source(s):	Primarily traffic noise associated with Marlesta Drive.
Traffic Count:	116 cars; 2 medium trucks; 0 buses; 0 heavy trucks.

dBA = A-weighted decibel; L_{EQ} = time-averaged noise level



Source: Aerial (SanGIS 2023)

HELIX Environmental Planning

Noise Measurement Locations

Figure 3.11-1

3.11.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to noise is provided below.

3.11.2.1 Federal

Federal Transit Administration

Multiple federal agencies have developed noise standards that apply to projects taken out by the applicable agency. While none of these federal noise laws, regulations, or policies for noise and vibration apply to the campus, aspects of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) noise impact analysis framework have been used for guidance in the analysis of the project's potential impacts. The FTA's Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual (FTA 2018) provides technical guidance and standards for construction and operational sources of noise and vibration, including for specific vibration-sensitive land uses such as historic structures and laboratory settings. Specific impact assessment procedures and thresholds from the Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual are described further below where they are used in this analysis.

3.11.2.2 State

California Noise Control Act

The California Noise Control Act is a section within the California Health and Safety Code that describes excessive noise as a serious hazard to the public health and welfare and that exposure to certain levels of noise can result in physiological, psychological, and economic damage. It also finds that there is a continuous and increasing bombardment of noise in the urban, suburban, and rural areas. The California Noise Control Act declares that the State of California has a responsibility to protect the health and welfare of its citizens by the control, prevention, and abatement of noise. It is the policy of the state to provide an environment for all Californians free from noise that jeopardizes their health or welfare.

California Building Standards Code

The California Building Standards Code (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 24) includes interior noise standards for residential and non-residential buildings. Title 24, Part 2, the California Building Code (CBC), establishes standards for interior room noise (attributable to outside noise sources) in residential buildings. Non-residential building noise exposure is regulated in CCR Title 24, Part 11, commonly known as CALGreen, which provides the option to follow a prescriptive approach to noise attenuation or achieve performance-based interior noise criteria. Specific sections of the California Building Standards Code that may be applicable to future campus projects are provided in detail below.

CBC Section 1206.2, Air-Borne Sound

Walls, partitions, and floor-ceiling assemblies separating dwelling units and sleeping units from each other or from public or service areas shall have an Sound Transmission Class (STC) of not less than 50 where tested in accordance with American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) E90, or have a Normalized Noise Isolation Class rating of not less than 45 if field tested, in accordance with ASTM E336 for air-borne noise. Alternatively, the STC of walls, partitions, and floor-ceiling assemblies shall be established by engineering analysis based on a comparison of walls, partitions, and floor-ceiling

assemblies having STC ratings as determined by the test procedures set forth in ASTM E90. Penetrations or openings in construction assemblies for piping; electrical devices; recessed cabinets; bathtubs; soffits; or heating, ventilating or exhaust ducts shall be sealed, lined, insulated or otherwise treated to maintain the required ratings. This requirement shall not apply to entrance doors; however, such doors shall be tight fitting to the frame and sill.

CBC Section 1206.3, Structure-Borne Sound

Floor-ceiling assemblies between dwelling units and sleeping units or between a dwelling unit or sleeping unit and a public or service area within the structure shall have an Impact Insulation Class rating of not less than 50 where tested in accordance with ASTM E492 or have a Normalized Impact Sound Rating of not less than 45 if field tested in accordance with ASTM E1007. Alternatively, the Impact Insulation Class of floor-ceiling assemblies shall be established by engineering analysis based on a comparison of floor-ceiling assemblies having Impact Insulation Class ratings as determined by the test procedures in ASTM E492. Impact Insulation Class is not required for floor-ceiling assemblies over non-habitable rooms or spaces not designed to be occupied, such as garages, mechanical rooms, or storage areas.

CBC Section 1206.4, Allowable Interior Noise Levels

Interior noise levels attributable to exterior sources shall not exceed 45 dB in any habitable room. The noise metric shall be either the Day Night sound level or CNEL, consistent with the noise element of the local general plan.

CALGreen Section 5.507.4, Acoustical Control

Non-residential buildings are required to incorporate acoustical design measures that limit interior noise from exterior sources. To comply, building assemblies must meet specified STC or Outdoor-Indoor Sound Transmission Class (OITC) ratings which are verified using ASTM testing standards. Designers may follow either a prescriptive method by using minimum STC/OITC ratings for walls, windows, and building envelopes, or a performance method that demonstrates interior noise would not exceed 50 dBA L_{EQ}. When following the prescriptive approach, wall and roof-ceiling assemblies exposed to the noise source shall have a composite STC rating of at least 50 or a composite OITC rating of at least 40, with exterior windows of a minimum STC of 40 or OITC of 30 within the 65 CNEL noise contour of an airport, freeway, railroad, industrial, or other fixed-guideway source. Where noise contours are not readily available, buildings exposed to a noise level of 65 dBA L_{EQ} during any hour of operation shall have building, building addition, or alteration exterior wall and roof-ceiling assemblies exposed to the noise source meeting a composite STC rating of at least 45 (or OITC 35), with exterior windows of a minimum STC of 40 (or OITC 30). The performance method alternatively allows an acoustical analysis to document a combination of wall or window composition requirements and exterior site features to demonstrate that interior noise attributable to exterior sources would not exceed 50 dBA L_{EQ} in occupied areas during the facility's hours of operation.

The rule applies primarily to buildings located in high-noise environments (e.g., near airports, freeways, rail lines). Exceptions to this requirement include buildings with few or no occupants or where occupants are not likely to be affected by exterior noise, as determined by the enforcement authority, such as factories, stadiums, storage, enclosed parking structures, and utility buildings. The Division of the State Architect also specifies that for public schools and community colleges, this section applies only to new construction.

Assembly Bill 1307

Assembly Bill 1307 was approved by Governor Newsom on September 7, 2023, and added Section 21085 to the Public Resources Code (PRC) relating to environmental quality. PRC Section 21085 states that, for residential projects, the effect of noise generated by project occupants and their guests on human beings is not a significant effect on the environment under CEQA.

3.11.2.3 Regional

Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans

The SDCRAA, which acts as the Airport Land Use Commission for the County, maintains the Airport Land Use Compatibility Plans (ALUCPs) for the County's airports. The ALUCPs contain policies to regulate land use and development near airports, including noise compatibility considerations. Consideration of airport compatibility related to noise is intended to result in new development that is compatible with aircraft noise. Specifically, each ALUCP provides guidance to local agencies to limit new noise-sensitive development within the noise compatibility boundary, identifies sound attenuation goals for noise-sensitive development, and considers if avigation easements are necessary. The campus is within the Airport Influence Areas (AIAs) identified in the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (previously Montgomery Field; SDCRAA 2010) and the San Diego International Airport (SDCRAA 2025) ALUCPs but is not within the noise contours identified for either airport.

3.11.2.4 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

The Design Guidelines and Standards Manual requirements related to noise and vibration are outlined below.

Sustainability Goals

Indoor/Outdoor Environmental Quality Goal 2: Improve indoor air quality and acoustics. **Key Performance Indicator (KPI):** Maintain indoor noise levels below 35 dB in classrooms and below 40 dB in shared spaces.

Sustainability Levels

The Sustainability Levels framework does not include required measures related to noise; however, it does include certain noise-related incentives within its point system. Relative to noise, a project is awarded three points if it complies with American National Standards Institute S12.60-2010 acoustical performance standards, thereby ensuring noise reduction, optimal speech intelligibility, and sound insulation in classrooms, offices, and shared spaces.

Design Guides and Standards

The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes noise and vibration control criteria for all District projects in Section 2.1.3, noting that noise and vibration control is the combined responsibility of all design professionals and consultants and must be considered in the design of every building or space. Generally, noise control is required to be provided to ensure usefulness of the facility for the purposes

for which the facility is designed whether that be studying, working, or socializing. Noise-producing equipment required for building operations should be designed to be located as far as possible from noise-sensitive areas such as classrooms. For specific guidance, the criteria note that noise control should be consistent with Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements.

For rooms requiring acoustic control, additional criteria are provided to address specific finishes and design considerations such as caulking of plumbing features, installation of light fixtures, separation of doors and restrooms from these spaces, locations of operable windows, and door gaps. Where noise control is critical to the anticipated use, a post-construction sound test may also be required.

Vibration control is also required to be considered for proposed equipment that may have effects on vibration-sensitive equipment, such as projectors, as well as the building.

General Specifications

General specifications and product and material data are provided in Section 2.2 of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs. The following general specifications relate to noise or vibration.

Building Demolition

4. Environmental Compliance: Ensure compliance with local, state, and federal environmental regulations regarding dust control, noise, and vibration.

Selective Demolition

3. Dust and Noise Mitigation: Implement measures such as dust barriers, negative air pressure systems, and noise-dampening method.

Gypsum Board Design Requirements

1. Acoustical Performance & Sound Transmission
    a. Sound Transmission Classification must be evaluated for each space to enhance speech privacy and noise control.
2. Requirements

Table 3.11-2
GYPSUM BOARD DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

Use	Sound Transmission Class (STC)	Maximum Noise Transmitted (decibels)
Private Offices	45-50	25-30
Conference Rooms	50-55	20-25
Classrooms	45-50	25-30
Laboratories	50-55	20-25
Mechanical/Electrical Rooms Adjacent to Occupied Spaces	55+	15-20
Corridors Adjacent to Offices/Classrooms	40-45	30-35

Source: District 2025

Air Distribution Systems

Goals and Objectives

1. Air Supply System Requirements:
    a. Ensure the supply air to conditioned spaces is:
        iv. Delivered draft-free, maintaining a noise level below NC 35, per ASHRAE [American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers] guidelines.

System Acoustical Features

1. Noise Control Guidelines:
    a. Follow ASHRAE HVAC Applications Handbook, Chapter on Sound and Vibration Control, referencing "Design Guidelines for HVAC Noise in Occupied Spaces."
2. Equipment Placement Considerations:
    a. Locate noise-generating equipment such as compressors, fan coil units, exhaust fans, and pumps outside occupied spaces.
3. Duct Noise Control Measures:
    a. Utilize turning vanes, low-velocity duct design, and sound attenuation baffles/materials to minimize noise transmission.
4. Vibration Isolation:
    a. Ensure vibration-isolating connections between air handlers, ducts, and supporting structures are adequately installed.

3.11.2.5 Local (Non-Regulatory)

While City of San Diego (City) regulations related to noise are not applicable to CMP development, local regulations provide relevant noise and vibration guidance used in this analysis where the District does not have established standards. These City regulations related to noise are summarized below.

City of San Diego General Plan, Noise Element

The Noise Element of the City's General Plan establishes noise compatibility guidelines for appropriate exterior noise levels at new land uses affected by traffic noise, as shown in Table 3.11-3, *City of San Diego Land Use Noise Compatibility Guidelines* (City 2024).

Table 3.11-3
CITY OF SAN DIEGO LAND USE NOISE COMPATIBILITY GUIDELINES

Land Use Category	Exterior Noise Exposure (CNEL)				
	<60	60-65	65-70	70-75	75+
Parks and Recreational					
Parks, Active and Passive Recreation					
Outdoor Spectator Sports, Golf Courses; Water Recreational Facilities; Indoor Recreation Facilities					
Agricultural					
Crop Raising & Farming; Community Gardens, Aquaculture, Dairies; Horticulture Nurseries & Greenhouses; Animal Raising, Maintain & Keeping; Commercial Stables					

Land Use Category	Exterior Noise Exposure (CNEL)				
	<60	60-65	65-70	70-75	75+
Residential					
Single Dwelling Units; Mobile Homes		45			
Multiple Dwelling Units		45	45		
Institutional					
Hospitals; Nursing Facilities; Intermediate Care Facilities; Kindergarten through Grade 12 Educational Facilities; Libraries; Museums; Child Care Facilities		45			
Other Educational Facilities including Vocational/Trade Schools and Colleges, and Universities		45	45		
Cemeteries					
Retail Sales					
Building Supplies/Equipment; Food, Beverages & Groceries; Pets & Pet Supplies; Sundries, Pharmaceutical, & Convenience Sales; Wearing Apparel & Accessories			50	50	
Commercial Services					
Building Services; Business Support; Eating & Drinking; Financial Institutions; Maintenance & Repair; Personal Services; Assembly & Entertainment (includes public and religious assembly); Radio & Television Studios; Golf Course Support			50	50	
Visitor Accommodations		45	45	45	
Offices					
Business & Professional; Government; Medical, Dental & Health Practitioner; Regional & Corporate Headquarters			50	50	
Vehicle and Vehicular Equipment Sales and Services Use					
Commercial or Personal Vehicle Repair & Maintenance; Commercial or Personal Vehicle Sales & Rentals; Vehicle Equipment & Supplies Sales & Rentals; Vehicle Parking					50
Wholesale, Distribution, Storage Use Category					
Equipment & Materials Storage Yards; Moving & Storage Facilities; Warehouse; Wholesale Distribution					50
Industrial					
Heavy Manufacturing; Light Manufacturing; Marine Industry; Trucking & Transportation Terminals; Mining & Extractive Industries					50
Research & Development				50	50

	Compatible	Indoor Uses	Standard construction methods should attenuate exterior noise to an acceptable indoor noise level.
		Outdoor Uses	Activities associated with the land use may be carried out.
45, 50	Conditionally Compatible	Indoor Uses	Building structure must attenuate exterior noise to the indoor noise level indicated by the number (45 or 50) for occupied areas, including residential habitable areas, commercial work/shopping areas, and office areas associated with industrial uses.
		Outdoor Uses	Feasible noise mitigation techniques should be analyzed and incorporated to make the outdoor activities acceptable.
	Incompatible	Indoor Uses	New construction should not be undertaken.
		Outdoor Uses	Severe noise interference makes outdoor activities unacceptable.

Source: City 2024
CNEL = Community Noise Equivalent Level

City of San Diego Municipal Code

Section 59.5.0401, Sound Level Limits

San Diego Municipal Code Section 59.5.0401, as follows, establishes exterior sound level limits for the City that apply to operational noise sources. The permissible sound level is determined by the land use of the affected property, as provided in Table 3.11-4, *City of San Diego Exterior Noise Limits*.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to cause noise by any means to the extent that the one-hour average sound level exceeds the applicable limit given in the following table [Table 3.11-4], at any location in the City on or beyond the boundaries of the property on which the noise is produced. The noise subject to these limits is that part of the total noise at the specified location that is due solely to the action of said person.

Table 3.11-4
CITY OF SAN DIEGO EXTERIOR NOISE LIMITS

Land Use Zone	Time of Day	One-hour Average Sound Level (dBA)
Single Family Residential	7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.	50
	7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	45
	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	40
Multi-Family Residential (up to a maximum density of 1/2000)	7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.	55
	7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	50
	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	45
All other Residential	7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.	60
	7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	55
	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	50
Commercial	7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.	65
	7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.	60
	10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.	60
Industrial or Agricultural	Anytime	75

Source: City of San Diego Municipal Code, Section 59.5.0401
dBA = A-weighted decibel

(b) The sound level limit at a location on a boundary between two zoning districts is the arithmetic mean of the respective limits for the two districts. Permissible construction noise level limits shall be governed by Section 59.5.0404 of this article.

Section 59.5.0404, Construction Noise

San Diego Municipal Code Section 59.5.0404, as follows, establishes sound level limits for construction noise within the City. Generally, the City permits construction between 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays with an average sound level of no greater than 75 dBA at the property line of a residentially zoned property during the 12-hour period.

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person, between the hours of 7:00 p.m. of any day and 7:00 a.m. of the following day, or on legal holidays as specified in Section 21.04 of the San Diego Municipal Code, with exception of Columbus Day and Washington's Birthday, or on Sundays, to erect,

construct, demolish, excavate for, alter or repair any building or structure in such a manner as to create disturbing, excessive or offensive noise unless a permit has been applied for and granted beforehand by the Noise Abatement and Control Administrator. In granting such permit, the Administrator shall consider whether the construction noise in the vicinity of the proposed work site would be less objectionable at night than during the daytime because of different population densities or different neighboring activities; whether obstruction and interference with traffic particularly on streets of major importance, would be less objectionable at night than during the daytime; whether the type of work to be performed emits noises at such a low level as to not cause significant disturbances in the vicinity of the work site; the character and nature of the neighborhood of the proposed work site; whether great economic hardship would occur if the work were spread over a longer time; whether proposed night work is in the general public interest; and he shall prescribe such conditions, working times, types of construction equipment to be used, and permissible noise levels as he deems to be required in the public interest.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) hereof, it shall be unlawful for any person, including the City of San Diego, to conduct any construction activity to cause, at or beyond the property lines of any property zoned residential, an average sound level greater than 75 dBA during the 12-hour period from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

(c) The provisions of subsection (b) of this section shall not apply to construction equipment used in connection with emergency work, provided the Administrator is notified within 48 hours after commencement of work.

3.11.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential noise impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant noise impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies;

2. Generate excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels; or

3. For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

The CEQA Guidelines do not provide quantitative thresholds for the evaluation of noise and vibration impacts. The District noise standards primarily address interior building noise through building design measures for campus land uses (refer to Section 3.11.2.4). Therefore, where quantitative noise or vibration limits for other source or receptor types have not been established by the District, standards established by the City and other public agencies are considered as thresholds for the purposes of this analysis, where appropriate. While City regulations do not apply to campus development projects, many City standards are considered relevant guidance to establish thresholds for this analysis of potential impacts on surrounding land uses, which are located within City limits and subject to City noise standards.

3.11.3.1 Threshold 1: Increase in Ambient Noise Levels

Construction impacts would be considered significant if noise generated during construction activities exceeds 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) at a noise-sensitive campus land use or at the property line of a residentially zoned off-site property.

Stationary source operational impacts at off-site locations would be considered significant if the sound level limits established by the City would be exceeded for the associated land use type (refer to Table 3.11-4). This analysis conservatively considers the more restrictive sound level limit at adjacent land uses and does not use the arithmetic mean between the applicable limit and the commercial limit that would apply to campus as allowed by San Diego Municipal Code Section 59.5.0401(b).

For on-campus uses, stationary source noise impacts could occur if new noise sources would cause the interior noise standard of 50 dBA L_{EQ} established in CALGreen for academic uses or 45 dBA L_{EQ} established in the CBC for residential uses to be exceeded. It is also noted that the District's future interior noise goal is to reduce interior noise levels below 35 dB in classrooms and below 40 dB in shared spaces. To determine whether a new stationary source of noise has the potential to conflict with the interior noise level standards, exterior noise levels must be calculated. Standard building materials can be assumed to provide at least 15 dB of attenuation from exterior noise levels. Therefore, this analysis considers an exterior noise limit of 65 dBA L_{EQ} for academic buildings and 60 dBA L_{EQ} for residential buildings. If these exterior noise limits are achieved, it can be assumed that the interior noise standards are also achieved with standard building materials. The District goal to achieve noise levels below 35 dB in classrooms and below 40 dB in shared spaces could be achieved with further enhanced building materials but is not used as a threshold of significance for this analysis.

Traffic noise impacts would be considered significant if traffic generated by the project causes the traffic noise level at off-site land uses to increase above the conditionally compatible noise level defined in the City's General Plan Noise Element for that land use (refer to Table 3.11-3). If this noise level is exceeded without the addition of project-related trips, the impact would be considered significant if the project-related increase exceeds 3 dBA CNEL (a perceptible increase).

3.11.3.2 Threshold 2: Ground-borne Vibration

With respect to human annoyance, FTA guidance sets a threshold of 80 VdB for infrequent vibration events at residential land uses and other buildings where people normally sleep (FTA 2018). This standard would apply to on- and off-campus housing. Classrooms, libraries and related learning spaces, and child development centers would be considered "institutional land uses" per FTA guidance as they primarily contain daytime and evening uses; therefore, an annoyance threshold of 83 VdB would apply (FTA 2018). As these annoyance thresholds are more stringent than the building damage thresholds that would apply to on- and off-campus buildings (90 to 102 VdB depending on construction materials), the vibration analysis below focuses on these annoyance thresholds for occupied buildings and discusses building damage only for buildings extremely susceptible to building damage (FTA Type IV; 90 VdB threshold).

An additional category of vibration effects relates to the potential for disruption of laboratory research, medical procedures, or other commercial processes that are sensitive to vibration. The FTA establishes thresholds for disruption of vibration-sensitive operations based on the type of equipment that would be affected. While these thresholds provide guidance for a variety of equipment types, specific vibration

criteria provided by a manufacturer may supersede the criteria in this section if available during subsequent environmental review. The space usage type that would apply to most vibration-sensitive uses at Mesa College would be Computer Equipment (adequate for computer equipment and low-power optical microscopes), for which the FTA establishes a maximum vibration level of 78 VdB (FTA 2018). For the Allied Health Education building (Building S), which contains medical imaging equipment, vibration effects are evaluated in comparison with the vibration criterion category of VC-A (adequate for medium- to high-power optical microscopes [400X], microbalances, optical balances, and similar specialized equipment), which has a maximum vibration level of 66 VdB, though equipment-specific information may be used to update this threshold during subsequent environmental review.

3.11.4 Impact Analysis

3.11.4.1 Increase in Ambient Noise Levels

Threshold 1: Would the project generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the Project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Temporary Sources

Construction

Construction of individual projects under the CMP would require the use of heavy off-road equipment for demolition, site clearing, grading, installation of underground utilities/infrastructure, construction of new buildings, and paving. Typical heavy-duty construction equipment would be used; however, no excessively noisy activities such as pile driving or blasting would be required. Although piles may be required to support some project components, the District or their contractor would utilize pre-drilling as an alternative to pile driving given the proximity of sensitive receptors. Construction would generate elevated noise levels that may disrupt NSLUs in the area. Potential effects of construction noise on sensitive animal species are addressed in the impact analysis and mitigation framework of Section 3.3, *Biological Resources*; the following focuses on potential effects of construction noise on human receptors.

The magnitude of the noise experienced at sensitive receptor locations would depend on the type of construction activity, equipment in use, duration of each construction phase, distance between the noise source and receiver, and any intervening structures or topography. As described in Section 3.11.1.3, above, the closest existing off-site NSLUs to the project site include the single-family residences to the north and east of campus. These residences were measured approximately 40 feet northeast of the center of the nearest CMP project location (the Facilities Services project). In addition, existing on-campus NSLUs that could be affected by construction noise include the existing classroom buildings throughout campus. The CMP would include the construction of additional classroom buildings and student housing, which would also be considered NSLUs once operational.

Heavy off-road construction equipment would not all operate at the same time or in the same location and would not be in constant use during a typical 8-hour operating day. Further, not all pieces of

equipment would be used near off-site residential property lines. While multiple construction projects could occur within campus at one time, the movement of equipment within each site and the distance between areas where heavy-duty equipment is operating simultaneously are anticipated to provide attenuation such that combined noise levels at an individual receptor would not be substantially higher than those estimated at 40 feet. The pieces of construction equipment assumed to be used for construction were based on the default off-road equipment list in the California Emissions Estimator Model, Version 2022.1 (CalEEMod; California Air Pollution Control Officers Association [CAPCOA] 2022). Construction equipment noise was evaluated using methodology from the FTA's *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual*, Option A for a quantitative construction noise assessment. Using this methodology, equipment is assumed to operate at the center of a project site, and the two noisiest pieces of construction equipment are assumed to operate concurrently in close proximity to each other (FTA 2018). This methodology was used to calculate construction noise levels during each phase of construction at 40 feet. In addition, the distance at which the operation of the combined construction equipment would reach 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) assuming a standard 8-hour workday was calculated. The results of the hourly average construction equipment noise level calculations and distances at which noise levels for each phase would reach 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) are shown in Table 3.11-5, *Construction Equipment Average Noise Levels*.

Table 3.11-5
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT AVERAGE NOISE LEVELS

Construction Phase	Two Noisiest Off-Road Equipment	dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) at 40 feet	Distance to 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) (feet)
Demolition	Dozer, Saw	85.7	137
Site Preparation	Dozer, Backhoe	86.4	148
Grading	Grader, Dozer	88.2	183
Building Construction	Generator Set, Crane	85.7	138
Underground Utilities	Dozer, Excavator	86.4	148
Paving	Paver, Roller	88.2	183
Architectural Coating	Air Compressors (2)	80.2	73

Source: FTA 2018
dBA = A-weighted decibel; L_{EQ} = time-averaged noise level

As shown in Table 3.11-5 above, all phases of construction could generate sound levels exceeding 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) at nearby NSLUs. As the distance between future project locations and sensitive receptors would vary widely depending on the project, additional calculations were completed to identify the distance at which construction activity would need to occur for noise levels at NSLUs to be kept at or below 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour). As shown in Table 3.11-5, the distance to the 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) contour ranges from approximately 73 feet to 183 feet; therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that noise levels would exceed the threshold of 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) if construction activity occurred within approximately 185 feet of an NSLU. For a future project that requires only select types of construction activity (e.g., demolition or coating application), the distances at which the threshold of 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) is assumed to be exceeded are shown in Table 3.11-5.

Nighttime construction could occasionally be required in specific circumstances, such as to accommodate concrete pours during lower temperature hours or to reduce temporary conflicts with traffic or operation of nearby uses. If required, nighttime construction would be limited to those activities needing to occur during nighttime hours and would be limited to a few nights of work rather

than throughout the entire construction period of an individual project. For example, nighttime construction could be required for concrete pouring during the paving phase of the parking structure component of the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project to allow proper curing. The center of this near-term project site would be located approximately 320 feet south of the nearest off-site residence; on-campus buildings would not be in use during these hours. Using the FTA methodology described above, construction noise levels during the paving phase of this near-term project were calculated at this distance. The two loudest pieces of equipment would be a paver and a roller, which would generate a combined noise level of 70.1 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) at a distance of 320 feet, below the 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) limit.

Special Events

Noise is currently generated by occasional outdoor special events at the Mesa College campus such as athletic events and outdoor student gatherings. These special events may involve the use of amplification equipment. Specific noise levels for each event cannot be defined since sound level expectations are different for various types of sports or events. The noise levels generated by special events on campus primarily affect the surrounding academic and administrative uses on campus, although they may be audible from off-campus residential neighborhoods to the north and east.

No new types or locations of outdoor special events are anticipated, as there are no new facilities proposed under the CMP that would accommodate new types of such events. In addition, the timing of such events is anticipated to remain consistent with existing conditions wherein outdoor events typically end by 10:00 p.m., when classes conclude. Outdoor sporting events would continue within the Athletics Complex; however, the baseball field and football stadium, where these events primarily occur, would remain in their existing locations. Track and field events that would be relocated from the Upper Athletic Field would be moved to spaces surrounding the football stadium where other track and field events occur under existing conditions. The remaining facilities proposed under the CMP would not result in new or altered special event noise compared to existing conditions. Therefore, special events at Mesa College would not result in substantial temporary increases in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project.

Permanent Sources

Vehicular Traffic Noise

The number of students attending on-campus classes at Mesa College is anticipated to increase over the buildout period of the CMP, which has the potential to increase traffic noise levels along surrounding roadways where NSLUs occur. Traffic noise impacts would be considered significant if the traffic noise level at off-site land uses increases above the conditionally compatible noise level for that land use (refer to Table 3.11-3) with the addition of campus-related trips or, where this noise level is already exceeded, increases by more than 3 dBA CNEL. The conditionally compatible noise level for single-family land uses (65 CNEL) would be applicable to the Marlesta Drive roadway segment, while the conditionally compatible noise level for multi-family land uses (70 CNEL) would be applicable to the roadway segments along Mesa College Drive.

Based on the anticipated traffic volumes for existing (baseline 2025), future (2045), and future with project scenarios (Linscott, Law, & Greenspan Engineers [LLG] 2026), noise levels were modeled in the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Federal Highway Administration's Traffic Noise Model version 2.5 for the roadway segments anticipated to accommodate the increases in campus-related

trips. The calculations provide modeled noise levels at 50 feet from the roadway centerline, which represents the approximate distance to the nearest structures and provides a reference distance at which to compare existing and future noise levels. The model also conservatively assumes flat terrain, though the traffic noise level at an individual receptor location would decrease with the presence of intervening structures, barriers, vegetation, or topography. Table 3.11-6, *Traffic Noise Levels*, provides the modeled noise level for each scenario and the project-generated increase for comparison with the applicable threshold.

Table 3.11-6
TRAFFIC NOISE LEVELS

Roadway Segment	Existing (2025) CNEL	Future (2045) CNEL	Future with Project (2045) CNEL	Project-Generated Increase (CNEL)	Direct Impact?[1]
Marlesta Drive					
Genesee Avenue to Chasewood Drive/Chasewood Way	62.0	62.4	63.2	0.8	*No*
Mesa College Drive					
Mesa College Circle/Armstrong Place to Armstrong Street	62.0	62.3	63.4	1.1	*No*
Armstrong Street to Ashford Street	63.8	64.2	65.0	0.8	*No*
Ashford Street to Linda Vista Road	65.2	65.6	66.2	0.6	*No*

Source: HELIX 2026

[1] A direct impact to off-site uses would occur if the project would increase noise levels above the applicable threshold or, where the existing noise level exceeds the threshold, would increase noise levels by 3 CNEL. The single-family noise level (65 CNEL) would be applicable to the Marlesta Drive roadway segment, and the multi-family residential conditionally compatible noise level (70 CNEL) would be applicable to the Mesa College Drive roadway segments.

CNEL = Community Noise Equivalent Level

As shown in Table 3.11-6, the future traffic noise levels with the addition of campus-related trips due to future growth would not exceed the compatibility levels identified for adjacent land uses in the General Plan Noise Element. An increase of less than 3 dBA is generally not considered to be perceptible by the average human ear. Traffic noise levels would increase by less than 3 dBA CNEL; therefore, the project would not generate vehicular traffic that results in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project.

HVAC Systems

The exact locations of future heating, ventilation, and air condition (HVAC) systems and other mechanical equipment required for buildings are not known at this time; therefore, this analysis establishes screening distances based on the typical equipment that is anticipated to be required for future projects implemented under the CMP. Overall, it is not anticipated that a substantial increase in noise levels would occur at off-site residences, as the addition of mechanical equipment to new buildings within the campus core would generate similar noise levels to those generated by comparable sources on existing buildings under ambient conditions.

A 20-ton rooftop, commercial HVAC unit manufactured by Carrier with a sound power level of 86.5 dBA (sound pressure level of 78.5 dBA at 1 meter) is used to predict the potential for HVAC-related noise effects and develop general screening guidelines for future projects (Carrier 2024). Based on this unit

type and conservatively not accounting for parapets or other attenuation features, noise levels would attenuate below the City's nighttime single-family residential property line limit of 40 dBA L_{EQ} at approximately 280 feet, below the City's nighttime multi-family residential property line limit of 45 dBA L_{EQ} at approximately 160 feet, below the 60 dBA L_{EQ} limit at campus residential buildings at 30 feet, and below the 65 dBA L_{EQ} limit applicable to non-residential campus buildings at approximately 16 feet. As HVAC systems would typically be installed on central portions of building rooftops, it is not anticipated that they could be installed within 30 feet of other NSLUs within campus. However, new HVAC systems or mechanical equipment could be sited within 280 feet of single-family residences or 160 feet of multi-family residences, thereby potentially increasing noise levels above the applicable limits.

Linear Generator

The location of a potential linear generator is not known at this time; therefore, the same 250-kilowatt Mainspring Linear Generator, Model No. MSE 3, anticipated to be installed at City College is used to establish a screening distance in this analysis. As the intent of the linear generator would be to provide flexibility during peak electrical demand periods, it is assumed that the generator would be operated during daytime hours. Based on the manufacturer's measurement of 65 dBA at 33 feet (10 meters; Mainspring 2026), the linear generator noise level would be attenuated below the City's daytime single-family residential property line limit of 50 dBA L_{EQ} at approximately 185 feet, below the City's daytime multi-family residential property line limit of 55 dBA L_{EQ} at approximately 105 feet, below the 60 dBA L_{EQ} limit at campus residential buildings at 60 feet, and below the 65 dBA L_{EQ} limit applicable to non-residential campus buildings at approximately 33 feet. Therefore, if the linear generator were to be sited within 185 feet of a single-family residence, 105 feet of multi-family residences, 60 feet of on-campus residences, or 33 feet of a noise-sensitive campus building (non-residential), it would have the potential to increase noise levels above the applicable limits.

Parking Garages

Noise associated with the operation of parking structures is irregular, specifically for the momentary sources of noise associated with individuals parking and exiting their vehicle (car door slams). Therefore, there is little potential for surface parking areas to result in an average noise level over a 1-hour period that substantially increases ambient noise levels. Further, surface parking areas occur along much of the campus perimeter under existing conditions and adjustments to these surface parking areas would not result in substantial changes in noise. Furthermore, the FTA estimates a parking garage with 1,000 vehicle movements in a given hour generates an hourly noise level of 56.4 dBA L_{EQ} at 50 feet from the center of the parking garage (FTA 2018). The parking structure location anticipated under the CMP that would be nearest an adjacent residential land use is the parking area associated with the Eastern Housing Option in the northeast corner of campus. The center of this parking garage would be located at least 100 feet from the property lines of these residences and its peak use would occur during daytime hours when the City's single-family residential property line limit is 50 dBA L_{EQ}. At 100 feet, the noise level generated by a parking garage with 1,000 vehicle movements would be 48.9 dBA L_{EQ} (FTA 2018), below the applicable City limit. It is also unlikely that this parking garage would accommodate 1,000 vehicle movements in a given hour as it would be limited to the footprint beneath the housing building. Other parking garages anticipated under the CMP would be located on the north and west sides of the upper mesa and would be much further from off-site residences. Parking garages associated with implementation of the CMP would not result in a substantial increase in noise levels in the project vicinity.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

The center point of construction for the Athletics Complex project would occur approximately 600 feet from the nearest off-site residences and at least 230 feet from the nearest noise-sensitive campus building (Exercise Science [Building ES]). Therefore, construction noise is not anticipated to exceed 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) at noise-sensitive land uses. As described in the program-level analysis above, the improvements proposed as part of the Athletics Complex project would not result in substantial temporary increases in special event noise. The Athletics Complex project would not generate substantial temporary increases in noise.

Permanent sources of noise associated with the Athletics Complex project would include HVAC systems for the new gym building proposed between the reconfigured field areas, which would be over 500 feet from the nearest single-family residence and 350 feet from the nearest noise-sensitive campus building (Child Development Center [Building CDC]). At these distances, HVAC noise would not conflict with the noise limits for these uses. No generator or new parking garages are proposed and no additional vehicular traffic compared to that considered in the program-level analysis would be generated. Therefore, the Athletics Complex project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in noise levels in the project vicinity.

Performing Arts and Administration Center

The center point of construction for the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would occur approximately 320 feet from the nearest off-site residences and approximately 120 feet from the nearest noise-sensitive campus building (Met High School [Building K2]). Therefore, construction noise could exceed the 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) limit at noise-sensitive land uses on campus. No outdoor special event spaces are proposed as part of this project. Therefore, the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project could generate a substantial temporary increase in noise during construction.

Permanent sources of noise associated with the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would include HVAC systems for the new building and a new parking structure. HVAC systems on the new building rooftop would occur approximately 300 feet from the nearest single-family residence and 45 feet from the nearest noise-sensitive campus building (Met High School [Building K2]), which would be outside of the screening distances for both of these uses. The proposed parking garage would also be located approximately 300 feet from single-family residential uses and would be shielded from noise-sensitive campus buildings by existing topography. No generator is proposed and no additional vehicular traffic compared to that considered in the program-level analysis would be generated. Therefore, the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would not result in a substantial permanent increase in noise levels in the project vicinity.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP could generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project during construction if construction occurs within 185 feet of an NSLU, or

within the distances identified in Table 3.11-5 for specific activities. Construction-related noise impacts would be **significant prior to mitigation**.

The CMP would not generate vehicular traffic that results in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project. However, implementation of the CMP could generate a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project as a result of stationary noise sources. Operational noise impacts from stationary sources would be **significant prior to mitigation**.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

The Athletics Complex project would not generate a substantial temporary or permanent increase in noise. Project-level impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

The Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project could generate a substantial temporary increase in noise, and temporary construction impacts would be **significant prior to mitigation**. Operational impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

NOI-1 Construction Noise Screening. If project construction activities resulting from implementation of the CMP are proposed within 185 feet of NSLUs or within activity-specific screening distances identified below from NSLUs when only select phases of construction are required, mitigation shall be integrated into the project's construction specifications:

- 137 feet for demolition
- 148 feet for site preparation or utility undergrounding
- 183 feet for grading or paving
- 138 feet for building construction
- 73 feet for architectural coating application

The following measures shall be implemented to minimize temporary noise caused by construction activities to below the applicable CEQA significance thresholds at NSLUs:

a. Require the construction contractor to work with proper administrative controls on equipment operation periods so as not to exceed a 12-hour average sound level of 75 dBA L_{EQ} at NSLUs between 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday except for infrequent circumstances when nighttime work is required for short durations to reduce conflicts with nearby uses or accommodate environmental factors such as heat during concrete pours. Prior to construction activities occurring outside of the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, the extended work hours shall be approved by the District construction manager for the project and the following noise control measures shall be implemented, as applicable.

b. Outfit construction equipment with properly maintained, manufacturer-approved or recommended sound abatement features on air intakes, combustion exhausts, heat dissipation vents, and the interior surfaces of engine hoods and power train enclosures.

c. Locate (to the extent practical) steady-state, continuously operating stationary construction equipment such as generators, pumps, and air compressors at least as far as the identified screening distances from nearby NSLUs. If this screening distance cannot be achieved within the project site, consider deployment of temporary noise walls or acoustical blankets that would block direct sound paths between the equipment and the receptor(s) of concern.

d. Position (to the extent practical) construction laydown and vehicle staging areas as far from NSLUs as feasible.

e. Inform, whenever possible and preferably with at least a two-week advanced notice, all neighboring NSLUs located within a 185 foot radius of the project site that a construction project is planned to commence. The notification shall describe the anticipated location of construction activities and the general construction schedule.

f. Where on-campus NSLUs are expected to be less than 185 feet away from construction activity, schedule construction activities anticipated to generate the highest noise levels to avoid the final week of classes. Adjust hours or days of the construction activity to occur before or after these most noise-sensitive periods of the Mesa College academic year.

NOI-2 Stationary Noise Source Assessment. If new or modified stationary noise sources are proposed, including but not limited to major HVAC systems, ventilated parking structures, or similar facilities with noise-generating mechanical equipment not analyzed, the project shall consider the feasibility of incorporating the following screening distances between the noise-sensitive land use and the stationary noise source:

- **HVAC/Mechanical System:** within 280 feet of a single-family residential land use or 160 feet of multi-family residential land use.

- **Linear Generator:** within 185 feet of a single-family residential land use, 105 feet of multi-family residential land use, 60 feet for a residential building on campus, or 33 feet of a noise-sensitive campus building (non-residential).

If these noise sources are planned to be located outside of the applicable screening distances, no further action shall be required. If such screening distances cannot be achieved based on the project location or needs, or a project requires a noise source type not considered in this analysis, a noise assessment shall be conducted by a qualified acoustician to determine if there would be a conflict with the off-campus noise limits established based on the City's Municipal Code or the interior noise limits for on campus buildings of 50 dBA L_{EQ} in non-residential spaces and 45 dBA L_{EQ} in habitable residential buildings. The noise assessment shall consider the specific source proposed, its location, intervening features, and other relevant site-specific or source-specific information available during project design.

If the noise assessment determines that noise levels would exceed the applicable limits at a receiving NSLU, project-specific recommendations for attenuation shall be provided within the noise assessment to reduce the noise level below the applicable limit. Such recommendations may include, but are not limited to, relocation, addition of noise barriers or louvers, and use of mufflers or other manufacturer-provided features. For potential conflicts with the on-campus interior noise levels, enhanced building materials such as windows or doors may also be considered, with the aim to reduce indoor noise levels below 35 dB in classrooms and below 40 dB in shared spaces if possible. The noise assessment shall demonstrate that the recommended noise attenuation techniques reduce noise levels at off-campus land uses below the applicable noise limit based on the City's Municipal Code. If feasible attenuation techniques considered in the noise assessment cannot achieve the limit applied at on-campus buildings, the incorporation of attenuation features that do not result in noise levels below this limit may be considered adequate with approval from the District Architect based on evidence that the anticipated exterior noise level would not result in conflicts with the interior noise level standard for the affected building's use.

The recommendations of the noise assessment shall be incorporated into the project plans and detailed within the project's construction specifications where applicable.

Project-Level

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

Mitigation measure NOI-1 would apply to the construction of the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures NOI-1 and NOI-2 would reduce program-level impacts related to the generation of substantial temporary and permanent increases in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project to a level that is **less than significant**.

Project-Level

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

Implementation of mitigation measure NOI-1 would reduce project-level impacts related to temporary increases in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.11.4.2 Ground-Borne Vibration

Threshold 2: Would the project result in generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Construction

The operation of construction equipment is anticipated to generate the highest levels of vibration during CMP implementation. Construction activities would have the potential to generate levels of ground-borne vibration that could adversely affect nearby vibration-sensitive land uses, buildings that are structurally sensitive to ground-borne vibration, and facilities where equipment and/or activities may be interrupted by vibration. The level of vibration experienced by these land uses would depend on the vibration-generated by the construction equipment or process. The project is anticipated to utilize drilling as an alternative to pile driving given the proximity of sensitive receptors. Therefore, in the absence of impact or vibratory-type pile driving equipment, the largest source of construction vibration is anticipated to be a vibratory roller, which generates a vibration velocity of 94 VdB at 25 feet (FTA 2018). Table 3.11-7, *Screening Distances by Vibration-Sensitive Receptor Type*, identifies screening distances for use of a vibratory roller based on the FTA criteria for building damage, human annoyance, and vibration-sensitive equipment.

Table 3.11-7
SCREENING DISTANCES BY VIBRATION-SENSITIVE RECEPTOR TYPE

Receptor Type	Threshold (VdB)	Distance from Vibratory Roller (feet)
FTA type IV – Buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage	90	35
Classrooms, libraries (and related learning spaces), and child development centers	83	60
Residential land uses (on- and off-campus)	80	75
Computer equipment rooms, low-power optical microscopes	78	85
Vibration Criterion A (VC-A) (medium- to high-power optical microscopes, microbalances, optical balances, and similar specialized equipment)	66	215

Source: FTA 2018

The construction activity to building or receptor distance would need to be greater than the screening distances shown in Table 3.11-7 in order for vibration exposure to be less than the thresholds identified for each receptor type. As construction of future projects could occur within these distances, construction has the potential to result in the generation of excessive ground-borne vibration.

Operation

Once operational, new and renovated facilities proposed under the CMP are not anticipated to be substantial sources of vibration. Stationary noise sources such as HVAC and other mechanical systems would not be expected to generate excessive vibration levels as these types of equipment are typically designed, manufactured, and installed with vibration-isolating connections and other features to minimize vibration. Increased levels of vibration from this type of equipment would indicate the need for maintenance and after such maintenance is completed, the equipment would generate negligible vibration levels. Increases in campus-related vehicle trips also would not generate excessive vibration as vibration from vehicular traffic is generally not perceptible outside of paved roadways that are properly maintained (Caltrans 2020). The project would not result in the permanent generation of excessive vibration levels.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

No permanent sources of substantial vibration would be installed for the Athletics Complex project. Building foundations for the Athletics Complex project requiring the use of a vibratory roller are anticipated to be constructed approximately 130 feet from the nearest building (District Police Offices) and approximately 300 feet from the Allied Health Education building (Building S) where vibration sensitive equipment occurs. Therefore, vibratory equipment would not be used within the applicable screening distances during construction (Table 3.11-7) and the Athletics Complex project would not result in the generation of excessive ground-borne vibration.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

No permanent sources of substantial vibration would be installed for the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project. Building foundations for the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project requiring the use of a vibratory roller could be constructed within 50 feet of the nearest building (Met High School [Building K2]), which is vibration sensitive. This project would be constructed over 1,000 feet from the Allied Health Education building (Building S) where vibration-sensitive equipment occurs and approximately 300 feet from the nearest residences; therefore, no effect on vibration-sensitive equipment or residential receptors would occur. However, sensitive on-campus uses (high school classrooms) could be affected by construction vibration.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Construction of the CMP projects could result in the generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels. Construction-related impacts would be **significant prior to mitigation**. Operation of the CMP would not result in generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels and operational impacts would be less than significant.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

The Athletics Complex project would not generate excessive construction or operational vibration. Project-level impacts would be **less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

Construction of the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project could temporarily generate excessive vibration at on-campus buildings. Project-level impacts related to construction would be **significant prior to mitigation**. Operational impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

NOI-3 Construction Vibration Screening. Prior to the commencement of construction of projects under the CMP that would involve the use of heavy earth-moving equipment within the following screening distances, the District shall retain a qualified acoustician to prepare a construction vibration mitigation program to be implemented by the construction contractor(s).

- 35 feet of buildings extremely susceptible to vibration damage such as historic structures (90 VdB threshold)
- 60 feet of classrooms, libraries, and child development centers (83 VdB threshold)
- 75 feet of residential land uses (80 VdB threshold)
- 85 feet of computer equipment rooms, low-power optical microscopes (78 VdB threshold)
- 215 feet of medium- to high-power optical microscopes, microbalances, optical balances, and similar specialized equipment (66 VdB threshold)

If additional information about the specific construction equipment to be used or types of vibration-sensitive equipment that would be affected is available during project planning, the screening distance may also be adjusted to a project-specific distance based on more detailed information about the sensitivity of the equipment and/or affected receptor. Where required, the construction vibration mitigation program shall identify and require measures to reduce vibration resulting from construction activities to the maximum extent practicable, as well as detail construction activity notification and monitoring processes that include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. If feasible, vibratory equipment shall be operated in static mode while it is required to be used within the screening distances noted above.

b. Where vibratory equipment would be used within the applicable equipment screening distance and use of static mode within this buffer distance is infeasible, vibration monitoring shall be performed during construction to establish the level of vibration

produced by activities using vibratory equipment. Monitoring shall be conducted when the construction activity would occur within the screening distances noted above. Monitoring shall be conducted using portable vibration-monitoring instrumentation that provides a calibrated record of local ground movement/accelerations. If construction vibration exceeds the appropriate threshold, work shall be stopped and resumed when alternative work methods and equipment can be implemented. Baseline vibration levels at specified locations shall be established prior to the construction activity.

c. Building occupants of vibration-sensitive land uses within the applicable screening distance shall be notified at least two weeks prior to the start of construction. The notification shall describe the anticipated vibration effects and construction schedule.

Project-Level

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

Mitigation measure NOI-3 would apply to construction of the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measure NOI-3 would reduce program-level vibration impacts during construction to a level that is **less than significant**.

Project-Level

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

Implementation of mitigation measure NOI-3 would reduce project-level vibration impacts during construction to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.11.4.3 Airport Noise Exposure

Threshold 3: For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the Project area to excessive noise levels?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The closest airports to the campus are the Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport, located approximately one mile northeast of the campus; Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, located approximately 3.95 miles northeast of the campus; and San Diego International Airport, located approximately 4.8 miles southwest of the campus. According to the ALUCP prepared for MCAS Miramar, the campus is not within the AIA or the airport noise contours associated with MCAS Miramar (SDCRAA 2011). The campus is within Review Area 2 of the AIA associated with Montgomery-Gibbs Executive Airport (SDCRAA 2010) and is within the Overflight Area Boundary and AIA associated with San Diego

International Airport (SDCRAA 2025). However, the campus is not within the noise contours associated with either of these airports (SDCRAA 2010; SDCRAA 2025). Therefore, although aircraft may be audible in the airspace around the campus, persons residing or working on campus would not be exposed to excessive noise levels from aircraft or airports.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be constructed within the Mesa College campus, which is not within the noise contours for nearby airports. Therefore, although aircraft may be audible from these project locations, people residing or working in the area would not be exposed to excessive noise levels from aircraft or airports.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels from aircraft or airports. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.11.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic area for the analysis of cumulative impacts related to noise is limited to the area directly surrounding the project site, as noise and vibration attenuate quickly with distance and only have the potential to combine with other sources in the immediate vicinity.

3.11.5.1 Increase in Ambient Noise Levels

Cumulative projects in the vicinity of the campus could involve construction activities or new permanent sources of noise which would have the potential to combine with project-related noise sources and result in a substantial increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity. As described in Section 3.11.4.1 above, noise associated with future campus construction activity has the potential to exceed the 75 dBA L_{EQ} (12-hour) construction noise limit considered in this analysis and consistent with the quantitative limits established in the San Diego Municipal Code. As a result, mitigation measure NOI-1 is proposed for projects located within the screening distances identified in Table 3.11-5. Similarly, a construction noise permit from the City would be required for cumulative projects anticipated to conflict with this limit or result in work outside of the typically allowed hours of construction. The permit would provide conditions for the construction work that limit its potential for excessive noise generation. Nonetheless, construction noise from multiple cumulative projects adhering to this limit could combine together to result in excessive noise at certain receptors and the cumulative impact would be significant. With implementation of mitigation measure NOI-1 for campus projects occurring within the applicable screening distances, the project would not considerably contribute to the identified significant cumulative impact to excessive ambient noise levels from temporary construction activities.

New stationary sources of noise associated with the residential land uses that surround campus are not anticipated to substantially increase noise levels in combination with new campus noise sources. Surrounding cumulative projects would be subject to the San Diego Municipal Code property line limits that are established to provide an appropriate noise environment based on the applicable land uses. In addition, mitigation measure NOI-2 requires campus projects installing new permanent noise sources within identified distances of off-site residences to attenuate noise to the limits established in the San Diego Municipal Code at off-campus properties. As campus projects and future cumulative development

projects would be required to adhere to these noise limits for stationary sources, the cumulative impact from these sources is considered less than significant.

The future traffic volumes used in the noise analysis include additional trips to account for growth anticipated in the region (LLG 2026). As shown in Table 3.11-6, traffic noise levels under the future with project condition would not exceed the conditionally compatible noise level at nearby residential land uses and would not increase by a perceptible amount (3 dB) from existing conditions. Therefore, with both regional growth and the increase in campus-related trips, there would not be a substantial increase in traffic noise levels and the cumulative impact would be less than significant.

Overall, the project's contribution to a significant cumulative increase in ambient noise levels **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.11.5.2 Ground-Borne Vibration

Cumulative projects in the vicinity of the project could involve construction activities that require vibration-generating equipment similar to the project; however, vibration attenuates rapidly with distance. Equipment generating substantial vibrations would need to be used concurrently and within very close proximity to a single vibration-sensitive receptor to result in a cumulative impact to that receptor. As cumulative projects would occur outside of the campus boundaries and campus projects constructed within the screening distances identified in Table 3.11-7 and the project would implement mitigation measure NOI-3, it is not anticipated that a cumulative project together with a CMP project could combine to result in a significant vibration impact. In addition, there are no substantial sources of operational vibration anticipated to be generated by the CMP projects; therefore, these projects would not contribute to cumulative impacts related to vibration. Overall, cumulative ground-borne vibration impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.11.5.3 Airport Noise Exposure

As discussed in Section 3.11.4.3, the project site is not located within the noise contours of any nearby airports. Therefore, neither the project nor cumulative projects would have the potential to contribute to a significant cumulative impact regarding airport noise exposure. **No cumulative impact** related to excessive noise exposure from airports would occur.

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3.12 Population and Housing

This section addresses the potential population and housing impacts that could occur as a result of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to population and housing are also addressed.

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

3.12.1.1 Regional and Local Population

According to the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) Series 15 Regional Growth Forecast, the total population in 2022 was 3,287,306 individuals in San Diego County (County) and 1,374,790 individuals in the City of San Diego (City) (SANDAG 2025). This represents an approximately 5.8 percent increase from the County's total population in 2010, which was 3,095,313 individuals (SANDAG 2010a), and an approximately 5.3 percent increase from the City's total population in 2010, which was 1,301,617 individuals (SANDAG 2010b). According to SANDAG's Regional Growth Forecast, the County is projected to have a population of 3,400,250 individuals by 2050, with 1,441,149 of those individuals being residents of the City. These population increases would represent a 3.4 percent increase in the County's population and a 4.8 percent increase in the City's population between 2022 and 2050 (SANDAG 2025).

3.12.1.2 Regional and Local Housing

SANDAG estimates that, as of 2022, there were a total of 1,235,642 housing units within the County and 553,921 housing units within the City (SANDAG 2025). The City's housing stock is made up of 56 percent single-family homes, while 44 percent is comprised of multi-family homes or other housing types such as mobile homes. Additionally, the City's housing stock consists of approximately 47 percent owner-occupied housing units and 53 percent renter-occupied housing units. It is estimated that 40 percent of households are comprised of non-related roommates or individuals living together and that 3.2 percent of rental units are vacant (City 2021). According to the SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast, the total number of households within the City is projected to increase to 627,668 by 2035, and to 661,533 by 2050. This would represent a 19.4 percent increase in housing units from 2022 to 2050 (SANDAG 2025).

According to the 6th Cycle Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) Plan, there are 171,685 housing units needed in the region between 2021 and 2029, with 108,036 of those housing units needed within the City (SANDAG 2020). Based on these numbers, there is an annual projected demand in the City for 13,505 new housing units, which would exceed the pace of housing unit growth projected through 2050 in the SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast by 2029. While the City's Housing Element identifies potentially developable land zoned for residential use that meets the City's RHNA allocation and supports programs that incentivize housing production (City 2021), the City does not build housing on private property and housing production is therefore dependent on developers or other agencies. For example, in 2024, the City permitted 8,782 new homes, approximately 12 percent of which (1,061 homes) were deed restricted (City 2025a). Therefore, the demand for new housing units in the City, especially affordable housing, is projected to continue to outpace the City's housing supply.

3.12.1.3 Regional and Local Employment

According to the SANDAG Regional Growth Forecast, the total number of jobs within the County was 1,611,632 in 2022. The number of jobs available in the County is anticipated to increase by 10.6 percent

by 2050, resulting in a total of 1,782,389 jobs countywide in 2050 (SANDAG 2025). Jobs within the City are projected to increase at a slower rate than in the County as a whole. The total number of jobs within the City was 876,977 in 2022, while the projected number of jobs in the City is estimated to be 907,847 by 2035 and 944,440 by 2050. This would represent a 7.7 percent increase in jobs in the City from 2022 to 2050 (SANDAG 2025). The primary employment industries in the City are driven by a combination of technology, healthcare, and tourism. The fastest growing industries in the City include construction, information systems, and finance and real estate, which are projected to grow by 65 percent, 41 percent, and 30 percent by 2035 respectively (City 2021).

3.12.1.4 Mesa College Population, Housing, and Employment

As of Fall 2025, 11,403 students were enrolled in on-campus courses at Mesa College. An additional 16,518 students were enrolled in either off-site programs (i.e., high school courses receiving District credits) or online courses. Because these students do not regularly attend the Mesa College campus, use campus facilities, or generate daily trips to campus, their enrollment does not contribute to campuswide operational environmental impacts. Under CEQA, only activities that result in a direct physical change or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment must be analyzed. Thus, this environmental analysis focuses on on-campus student population growth.

As of July 2025, Mesa College employed a total of 2,038 individuals (District 2025a). Mesa College does not currently provide on-campus housing.

3.12.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to population and housing is provided below. No federal regulations regarding population and housing apply to the project.

3.12.2.1 State

Assembly Bill 648

Assembly Bill (AB) 648 added Section 81055 to the California Education Code to exempt the construction of university housing development projects, as defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080.58, from the local zoning regulations of a city, county, or city and county when such projects are constructed on property owned or leased by a community college district. In order to meet the requirements of Education Code Section 81055, a proposed off-campus housing project must be located within 0.5 mile of a main campus, or within 0.5 mile of a satellite campus that existed before July 1, 2025. For housing projects including faculty or staff units, a portion of the units must be made available at rents affordable to extremely low income and lower income faculty and staff.

3.12.2.2 Regional

San Diego Association of Governments Regional Plan

SANDAG's latest regional plan, the 2025 Regional Plan, is a regional transportation and sustainability plan that aims to provide a blueprint for a more livable, equitable, and innovative future (SANDAG 2025). It combines required elements of a Regional Comprehensive Plan, Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), into one document that looks towards 2050. As such, the 2025 Regional Plan must comply with specific state and federal mandates, including an SCS per

Senate Bill (SB) 375 that achieves Greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB); compliance with federal civil rights requirements (Title VI); and environmental justice considerations, air quality conformity, and a public participation process. The Regional Plan is updated every four years and incorporates updates in population, housing, income/employment, and land use information to revise projections and identify changes in policy strategies or project investments needed to achieve these state and federal mandates. The Mesa College campus is in an area of the City anticipated on the SCS Land Use Pattern maps prepared by SANDAG to accommodate job and housing growth in the region for 2035 and 2050 (SANDAG 2025).

Regional Housing Needs Assessment

SANDAG is required by state law to complete a RHNA in consultation with the California Department of Housing and Community Development to determine the region's housing needs in four income categories—very low, low, moderate, and above moderate. The current adopted RHNA for the San Diego region covers the eight-year period from April 15, 2021 through April 15, 2029. The RHNA allocates housing needs in the four income categories for each of the cities and the County to use in their housing element. The cities and County are required to update their housing elements to include RHNA allocations every eight years; updates can be required every four years if updated housing elements are not adopted by certain timelines.

3.12.2.3 District

San Diego Community College District Strategic Plan

The San Diego Community College District Strategic Plan includes an objective to develop an Enrollment Management Plan, which is essential for establishing the quantitative measures that will be used to monitor progress toward the Strategic Plan's goals, particularly those related to student success, access, and institutional resiliency. It positions enrollment management as a Districtwide priority in response to post-pandemic enrollment declines, shifting regional demographics, and changing student needs. The Strategic Plan notes that the Enrollment Management Plan will supply the metrics aligned with the Student-Centered Funding Formula, inform future planning cycles, and support coordinated strategies across the District campuses.

3.12.2.4 Local (Non-Regulatory)

City of San Diego General Plan Housing Element

The 2021-2029 Housing Element of the City of San Diego General Plan serves as a policy guide to address the comprehensive housing needs of the City (City 2021). State law mandates that local governments outline the housing needs of their community, the barriers or constraints to providing that housing, and actions proposed to address these concerns. Updated housing elements are required to be updated at least every eight years. The six major goals of the 2021-2029 Housing Element are to construct quality housing, improve the existing housing stock, provide new affordable housing, enhance quality of life, integrate sustainable development, and publicize City housing needs and resources. While the Mesa College properties are not included on the adequate sites inventory, the Housing Element also encourages colleges such as Mesa College to partner with others to provide as much student housing as possible on and adjacent to campuses and transit.

Clairemont Mesa Community Plan

The Clairemont Community Plan serves as 30-year policy guide for land use, housing, mobility, urban design, recreation, and conservation in the community (City 2025b). It promotes mixed-use, transit-oriented villages, diverse and affordable housing, and a multimodal transportation network with Complete Streets and Vision Zero strategies. Goals and policies related to housing include, but are not limited to, the following:

Policy 2.1 Provide a diverse mix of housing types that are affordable to people of all incomes, including homes for seniors, students and families.

Policy 2.2 Provide a diverse mix of higher density housing opportunities in village areas, including homes for older adults and people with disabilities, within walking distance to higher frequency transit service.

3.12.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential population and housing impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant population and housing impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure); or

2. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

3.12.4 Impact Analysis

3.12.4.1 Population Growth

Threshold 1: Would the project induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?

Impact Discussion

Increases in population, housing, and employment are generally considered to be social or economic effects, as opposed to physical effects, which are the focus of CEQA analysis. Economic or social effects on their own do not constitute significant effects on the environment. However, there are circumstances where social and economic changes could indirectly cause physical environmental impacts or result in changes to environmental resources, such as air quality, traffic, or noise levels. In other situations, lead agencies may evaluate social or economic changes related to a physical change in determining the significance of a physical change (CEQA Guidelines Section 15131). Therefore, the following analysis focuses on the effects of growth specifically as they relate to physical environmental effects. Additional discussion of economic growth is provided in Section 5.0, *Other CEQA Considerations*.

Program-Level

Construction of the individual projects under the CMP would temporarily increase construction employment opportunities. Given the relatively common nature and scale of proposed future projects, the demand for construction employment is anticipated to be met within the existing and future labor market in the region. The size of the construction workforce would vary during the different stages of construction but would not be of a size such that a substantial number of laborers from outside of the County would relocate for these employment opportunities. The District also specifically prioritizes hiring construction contractors from the local workforce pursuant to its Community Benefits Agreement with the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council and many craft unions, which applies to construction contracts valued at $1 million or more. The Community Benefits Agreement outlines requirements for hiring local workers based on zip code; requires 80 percent of craft hours to be performed by County residents, active-duty military dependents, or current or former District students; and supports apprenticeship programs to continue development of the local construction workforce. Therefore, project construction would not directly or indirectly induce substantial population growth.

As discussed further in Section 2.1.3, a conservative growth rate of 1.5 percent growth in the on-campus population per year was used to estimate enrollment increases throughout buildout of the CMP through 2045. With the application of this growth rate, 15,358 on-campus students are anticipated to attend Mesa College in 2045, which would represent an increase of 3,955 on-campus students compared to Fall 2025 baseline conditions. Employee growth is also anticipated at the same rate to maintain the current student-to-staff ratio, which reflects established operational standards for delivering academic programs and student services at Mesa College. Approximately 2,745 employees are anticipated to be required in 2045, which represents an increase of 707 employees compared to 2025 baseline conditions.

Under the CMP, the Mesa College on-campus student population and employee population would increase. However, it is anticipated that this enrollment and job growth would occur as a result of an increase in students and employees from the project region, as community colleges are generally designed to target and serve local communities. Increases in on-campus enrollment would be expected to come from the existing and projected regional population and would not draw new people to the region. This projected regional growth is accounted for in SANDAG's population projections for the County. The regional population is expected to increase by approximately 112,944 individuals from 2022 through 2050 and reach 3.4 million, which represents an increase of 3.4 percent over this period. As discussed above, the on-campus population is projected to grow by 4,662 individuals (3,955 students and 707 employees) from 2025 through 2045, which represents a growth rate of 1.5 percent per year. While the increase in on-campus population growth considered in this PEIR would outpace regional population growth, this 1.5 percent annual on-campus growth rate reflects the potential for attracting and accommodating more students in on-campus courses through implementation of planned improvements to campus facilities, academic offerings, and student services, while also providing a conservative approach for environmental analysis. Mesa College would continue to serve the regional population as it grows and would not induce substantial regional population growth.

The potential for additional housing to be provided on campus as a future project is also not anticipated to result in unplanned population growth in the region, as such housing would be provided for District students and/or employees who, as discussed above, are existing residents of the region. In addition, as described further in Section 3.12.1.2, the demand for housing in the region over the coming years is anticipated to outpace the supply, especially for affordable housing options. A District study conducted in 2025 found that 59 percent of District students faced housing insecurity, and 23 percent reported

being homeless (District 2025b). Similarly, the lack of available and affordable housing for District employees has priced some employees out of the housing market near their work locations. Therefore, by providing affordable student or employee housing, the District would provide existing residents of the region with a stable living environment, enabling them to continue to study in or work for the District. The addition of housing units to campus would accommodate existing populations and would not induce unplanned population growth.

The projects proposed under the CMP also would not indirectly induce population growth as no extension of infrastructure is proposed that would allow for future development where it does not currently occur. The CMP projects would connect to existing utilities, including water, sewer, electricity and telecommunication services. The surrounding area is already developed with urban uses and infrastructure, and the connection of proposed buildings to existing infrastructure would not provide new utilities or other infrastructure to support growth in a previously undeveloped area. Therefore, the project construction would not indirectly induce substantial population growth.

Project-Level

The near-term projects are individual physical improvements proposed on campus that are part of the overall CMP. They would replace existing functions on campus and provide enhanced spaces for existing programs. Therefore, the near-term projects would not individually induce campus enrollment or regional growth.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not induce substantial unplanned direct or indirect population growth in an area. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.12.4.2 Housing Displacement

Threshold 2: Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The Mesa College campus currently offers no on-campus housing options. As such, under the proposed CMP, no housing would be permanently removed and no replacement housing would be required. Rather, one of the projects proposed under the CMP is a housing project that would add housing to campus and accommodate existing students or faculty/staff.

The projects implemented under the CMP would require the demolition of various campus facilities, including recreational, educational, administrative, and student support facilities. The removal of these facilities would require the temporary relocation of these services within existing campus buildings or the temporary use of other modalities, such as online classes. The students, faculty, staff, and community members who use these facilities would temporarily use the alternative locations for the services offered in these facilities. As none of the future projects would involve the demolition of housing, demolition of these various facilities would not necessitate the construction of replacement

housing elsewhere. Further, the demolished campus facilities would be replaced with expanded and upgraded facilities, the environmental impacts of which are analyzed throughout this PEIR. As such, implementation of the CMP would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Project-Level

The Athletics Complex project would require the demolition of the existing Pool, Upper Athletic Field, gym, and original Exercise Science building (Building L1). The removal of these facilities would require the individuals who use these facilities to temporarily use other facilities providing similar services. However, the near-term projects would not involve the demolition of on-campus housing, and demolition of these various facilities would not necessitate the construction of replacement housing. Implementation of the near-term projects would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, thereby necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.12.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope for cumulative analysis regarding population and housing is the San Diego region.

3.12.5.1 Population Growth

Cumulative development projects could either directly or indirectly induce population growth that results in environmental effects, thereby resulting in significant cumulative population growth impacts. The CMP would include the construction of on-campus student housing that is anticipated to accommodate approximately 800 students, and the on-campus population is expected to increase by 4,662 individuals (3,955 students and 707 employees) from 2025 through 2045. However, this growth would occur as a result of increased enrollment by students from the project region and is therefore accounted for in SANDAG's population projections for the County and the City. Further, the project would not result in the removal of a barrier of growth, such as utility extension or expansion, which would reasonably result in the intensification or development of land and indirectly induce growth. Additionally, because the campus is surrounded by existing development, it is unlikely that the approval and construction of projects under the CMP would lead to an intensification of the land uses in the immediate vicinity of the site. Therefore, the project contribution to cumulative impacts related to population growth **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.12.5.2 Housing Displacement

Cumulative development projects in the region would involve the demolition of existing housing and construction of new housing, which could result in significant cumulative impacts related to housing displacement and the need for replacement housing. However, as the proposed CMP would not demolish existing housing, it would not contribute to these potential impacts. The project contribution to cumulative impacts related to the displacement of substantial numbers of existing people or housing **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

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3.13 Public Services

This section addresses the potential public services impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to public services are also addressed.

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

3.13.1.1 Fire Protection

Mesa College does not have its own fire department and therefore relies on the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD), who is responsible for responding to emergencies that occur throughout the City of San Diego (City) and on the campus itself. The SDFD has 52 fire stations responsible for protecting 343 square miles. If additional support is needed, SDFD relies on automatic aid agreements with jurisdictions adjacent to the City. These agreements ensure that the closest engine company or medical unit can respond to an incident on the Mesa College campus, regardless of its jurisdiction.

The SDFD service area is divided into Engine Administrative Boundaries, each of which has a fire station that is the first to respond to calls within its boundary when possible. The majority of the campus is within Engine Administrative Boundary 36, which contains Fire Station 36 located at 5855 Chateau Drive, approximately 1.1 miles north of campus. Small portions of the campus's eastern side, generally east of the football stadium, are within the Engine Administrative Boundary 28, which contains Fire Station 28 located at 3880 Kearny Villa Road, approximately 1.2 miles east of campus. Fire Station 36 possesses both a fire engine and a paramedic unit; and Fire Station 28 possesses a fire engine, aerial truck, water tender, and foam carrier. While these stations would be the first to respond, another nearby fire station, Fire Station 23 located at 2190 Comstock Avenue, approximately 1.4 miles south of the campus, could also potentially serve the project site in the event of an emergency (City 2025).

According to the Performance Audit of the Fire-Rescue Department's Emergency Medical Response Process (Performance Audit) prepared by the City (2026), the average response time for the Mesa College area (Council District 2) was 8 minutes and 57 seconds from fiscal year 2023 through fiscal year 2025, which exceeds the arrival time standard of 6 minutes and 30 seconds that is established by the SDFD. The Performance Audit concluded that these slow response times were largely attributed to slow turnout times and included recommendations for the SDFD such as annual reporting on the dispatch process and response times to City leadership and the establishment of an internal SDFD policy to standardize how turnout time is tracked and evaluated. The Performance Audit does not include recommendations for the construction of additional fire stations (City 2026).

3.13.1.2 Police Protection

The District provides its own police services for its campuses through the District Police Department. The District Police Department is a Peace Officer Standards and Training certified, full-service police agency operating in compliance with applicable state standards under California Penal Code Section 13522. District Police Department officers are authorized by California Penal Code Section 830.32 and California Education Code Section 72330 with law enforcement authority that extends to any place in the state while performing their primary duty, consistent with the authority of municipal law enforcement officers. The District Police Department employs approximately 40 officers who provide the primary law enforcement response on and around District properties such as the Mesa College campus. The District

Police Department has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of San Diego Police Department that establishes operational cooperation between the two agencies, including response and investigative responsibilities for certain incidents occurring on or adjacent to District property (District 2026a). Such coordination includes information sharing, coordinated responses, investigations of specific types of crimes, and additional law enforcement support when needed.

The District Police Department is headquartered at 1536 Frazee Road but has a campus police business office on the southeastern corner of the Mesa College campus in Building Q. According to the District Police Department Policy Manual (District 2026b), calls are dispatched based on the following priority levels and allotted response thresholds:

a) Priority 1 calls, defined as those involving life or death situations, serious crimes in progress, and/or imminent injury, should be dispatched within 5 minutes.

b) Priority 2 calls are defined as emergency calls that are non-life threatening. All priority 2 calls should be dispatched within 30 minutes.

c) Priority 3 calls are non-emergency calls where there is no immediate or potential threat to life or property, including cold reports, service calls and officer self-initiated activity. Priority 3 calls should be handled as soon as practicable.

3.13.1.3 Schools

The San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) provides transitional-kindergarten through 12th grade school services to most of the City. As Mesa College does not currently offer on-campus student housing, the demand for schools would be from commuting students, faculty, and staff with children. Transitional-kindergarten through 12th grade students living in off-campus households would typically attend the schools designated by SDUSD for their neighborhood; therefore, these students would be spread throughout the school district.

San Diego Metropolitan Regional, Career, and Technical Highschool (also known as “The Met”) is a public school in the SDUSD and is located within the Mesa College campus. Mesa College also contains a Child Development Center, which offers instructional programs for Child Development program students and educational programming for infants, toddlers, and preschool children (Mesa College 2025).

3.13.1.4 Parks

Mesa College provides a variety of on-campus recreational opportunities for students via both formal class settings and recreational amenities. The City Department of Parks and Recreation maintains a vast network of parks, recreational facilities, and open space throughout the City. Refer to Section 3.14, *Recreation*, for a discussion of specific on- and off-campus park and recreation facilities and services.

3.13.1.5 Other Public Services

Mesa College operates a Learning Resource Center (Building LR) on the western side of campus, which offers library services to faculty and students. Various other student-focused facilities are also located throughout the campus, such as counseling services in the Student Services Center (Building I4), free

tutoring services offered in Building LR, and physical and mental health services offered at the Health Center in Building I4.

In addition, the San Diego Public Library operates 36 library branches throughout the City. The Library Master Plan (City 2023) identified the Mesa College campus as within Zone B - North/Downtown, which is anticipated to require the construction of approximately 50,000 square feet (SF) of additional library space to accommodate the population growth in this area anticipated through 2040. This additional library space is anticipated to be provided in a replacement University Community Library and a new library location in the Clairemont Mesa area (City 2023).

3.13.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of state, District, and local regulations that pertain to public services is provided below. No federal or regional regulations regarding public services apply to the project.

3.13.2.1 State

California Building Standards Code

The California Building Standards Code, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulation (CCR), includes the California Building Code (CBC; Title 24, Part 2), California Wildland Urban Interface Code (CWUIC; Title 24, Part 7), and California Fire Code (CFC; Title 24, Part 9). The California Building Standards Code is updated every three years with recent updates strengthening fire safety standards, especially for development within Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZs). Typical fire safety requirements of the CBC include the installation of fire sprinklers and smoke detectors; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and the requirement to provide access for emergency responders. The CWUIC prescribes specific building standards and construction methods for new buildings in a VHFHSZ. These standards address materials use for roofing, ventilation, walls, and more; require preparation of fire protection plans; and establish defensible space requirements. The CFC includes provisions and standards for emergency planning and preparedness, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, and fire hydrant locations and distribution. See Section 3.18, *Wildfire*, for additional details related to the fire-related requirements of these building codes.

3.13.2.2 District

San Diego Community College District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes various District policies for the design and construction of new facilities related to fire protection. The Project Programming section requires each project to include a detailed Fire Accessibility Plan that meets Division of the State Architect (DSA) standards by showing fully dimensioned fire department access routes, all fences and gates along those routes, and the locations of hydrants, valves, fire department connections, and sprinkler risers, along with identification of the hydrants used for fire-flow testing and the required approval stamp from the local fire authority. The Interior Finishes section establishes fire-safety and code-compliance standards requiring all interior finishes to meet CBC flame-spread and smoke-development limits, with Class A-rated wall and ceiling materials in egress corridors, stairways, and assembly areas, and chemically resistant finishes in instructional and lab spaces. Lastly, the Site Design section specifies that all fire access roads must comply with the requirements of CBC Title 24, Part 9, Appendix D.

San Diego Community College District Board Policies

Board Policy 7600 establishes a campus police department under the supervision of a Chief of Police who reports directly to the District Executive Operations Officer. The primary purpose of the District Police Department is to enforce the law on or near District campuses and properties. This Board Policy notes that public safety services must adhere to principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility, and shall advance access to education by creating safe, secure, peaceful, and inclusive campus environments. In cooperation with the Chief of Police, the Chancellor is authorized to issue other regulations necessary for the administration of the police department.

3.13.2.3 Local (Non-Regulatory)

City of San Diego General Plan

The City of San Diego General Plan includes a Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element (City 2024a) which addresses public services intended for the benefit of the City's existing and projected residents. The Public Facilities, Services, and Safety Element include goals and policies addressing the City's fire protection services.

PF-D.1 Locate, staff, and equip fire stations to meet established response times as follows:

a. To treat medical patients and control small fires, the first-due unit should arrive within 7.5 minutes, 90 percent of the time from the receipt of the 911 call in fire dispatch. This equates to 1-minute dispatch time, 1.5 minutes company turnout time and 5 minutes drive time in the most populated areas.

b. To provide an effective response force for serious emergencies, a multiple-unit response of at least 17 personnel should arrive within 10.5 minutes from the time of 911-call receipt in fire dispatch, 90 percent of the time.

- This response is designed to confine fires near the room of origin, to stop wildland fires to under 3 acres when noticed promptly, and to treat up to 5 medical patients at once.

- This equates to 1-minute dispatch time, 1.5 minutes company turnout time and 8 minutes drive time spacing for multiple units in the most populated areas.

PF-D.5 Maintain service levels to meet the demands of continued growth and development, tourism, and other events requiring fire-rescue services.

a. Provide additional response units, and related capital improvements as necessary, whenever the yearly emergency incident volume of a single unit providing coverage for an area increases to the extent that availability of that unit for additional emergency responses and/or non-emergency training and maintenance activities is compromised. An excess of 2,500 responses annually requires analysis to determine the need for additional services or facilities

PF-D.6 Provide public safety related facilities and services to assure that adequate levels of service are provided to existing and future development.

According to the City of San Diego General Plan, a three-mile distance between fire stations is typically sufficient to achieve response time objectives, although topography and terrain throughout the City present considerable demands on fire-rescue services under various conditions and can also affect response times (City 2024a). The City of San Diego General Plan Environmental Impact Report (EIR) identified planned fire station facilities within the City, which included a planned fire station located within the Linda Vista community south of campus, which could also serve the Mesa College campus (City 2024b).

Although the General Plan states that the first unit should arrive within 7 minutes and 30 seconds 90 percent of the time from when Fire Dispatch receives the 911 call, the SDFD has a more stringent policy, which states that the first unit should arrive within 6 minutes and 30 seconds from receipt of dispatch notification 90 percent of the time (City 2026).

3.13.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential public services impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant public services impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

1. Fire protection;
2. Police Protection;
3. Schools;
4. Parks; or
5. Other Public Facilities.

3.13.4 Impact Analysis

3.13.4.1 Fire Protection

Threshold 1: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for fire protection?

Impact Discussion

The increase in building area and on-campus student enrollment could increase demand for SDFD services due to an increase in facilities and population on the Mesa College campus. However, implementation of projects under the CMP would not require the construction of new SDFD facilities or the expansion of existing fire protection facilities. As discussed in Section 3.13.1.1, the campus is within

the existing service areas of SDFD Fire Stations 28 and 36 and has therefore already been accounted for in terms of SDFD service areas within the City.

According to the Performance Audit prepared for the SDFD, the average response time for the Mesa College area was 8 minutes and 57 seconds from fiscal year 2023 through fiscal year 2025, which exceeds the arrival time standard of 6 minutes and 30 seconds that is established for the SDFD (City 2026). These response times reflect existing citywide conditions and trends rather than conditions caused by development within the Mesa College campus. Although the Performance Audit did not identify additional fire station facilities as a recommendation for the SDFD to improve their response times, the General Plan EIR identified a planned fire station for the Linda Vista community that could serve the Mesa College campus (City 2024b). See Section 3.13.1.1 and Section 3.13.2.3 above for additional details. Once implemented by the City, this fire station is anticipated to improve response times to the Mesa College campus. When proposed, the City would be responsible for project-level environmental review of the proposed fire station and implementation of applicable mitigation measures from the General Plan EIR or other environmental review process.

In addition, the future projects proposed under the CMP would not generate new or excessive fire risk, as each individual project design would comply with applicable state and District building regulations in place to reduce the risk of fire. These would include the CBC and CFC fire safety and building materials requirements and the District requirements related to emergency access, sprinkler and fire hydrants, building materials, and compliance with CBC fire safety requirements. The CMP would not result in the need for new or physically altered fire protection facilities; therefore, no substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities would occur.

Project-Level

Implementation of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not require the construction of new SDFD facilities or the expansion of existing fire protection facilities. The Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project and the Athletics Complex project would be served by SDFD Fire Station 36. Both of the near-term project sites are already accounted for in the SDFD service area and the slight increase in building area associated with these projects would not result in the need for physically expanded SDFD facilities. Further, the near-term projects would be designed and constructed in accordance with relevant CBC, CFC, and District fire safety policies discussed further in the program-level analysis above. Implementation of the near-term projects would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered fire protection facilities. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.13.4.2 Police Protection

Threshold 2: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for police protection?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The growth in enrollment and employment that is projected on campus could increase demand for police protection services due to an increase in the population on the Mesa College campus. Campus population growth would not affect police protection facilities off campus where commuting student, faculty, and staff would reside, as the increase in the on-campus population would come from the existing regional population (refer to Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*) where police services are already provided.

As discussed in Section 3.13.1.2, the District operates its own police department and has an existing office at Mesa College. The District Police Department has established response times based on the priority level of an emergency call (refer to Section 3.13.1.2). As the population at the Mesa College campus increases throughout buildout of the CMP, the District would be responsible for ensuring the District Police Department is adequately staffed or supported by neighboring jurisdictions, such as the City, to ensure that these response times are maintained. No specific improvements to physical police protection facilities are proposed under the CMP or anticipated to be required to serve the on-campus population. Should the District determine that new or expanded police protection facilities are required to ensure that adequate response times are maintained on the Mesa College campus, the new or expanded facility would undergo environmental review to determine if it is within the scope of the environmental analysis contained in this PEIR and, if so, applicable mitigation measures would be applied. As is the case for other future campus projects, if a police protection-related project is determined to be outside of the scope of this PEIR, then a separate environmental document would be prepared, and potentially significant environmental impacts would be mitigated to the extent feasible.

As discussed above, implementation of the CMP would serve the existing regional population, which is expected to grow throughout buildout of the CMP through 2045. Should new or expanded City police protection facilities be necessary to serve this increase in regional population in the future, the City would provide environmental review under CEQA and the facility would be required to comply with City development regulations and environmental review requirements. Implementation of the CMP would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities or the need for new or physically altered police protection facilities.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would each be serviced by the District Police Department. As the near-term projects would accommodate projected enrollment growth and would not directly contribute to population growth on the campus, the near-term projects would not require expanded police protection facilities. As discussed in the program-level analysis above, the District would ensure that the established response times for the District Police Department are maintained as the Mesa College

campus population increases throughout the buildout of the CMP. Implementation of the near-term projects would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities or the need for new or physically altered police protection facilities.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered police protection facilities. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.13.4.3 Schools

Threshold 3: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for schools?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The growth in enrollment and employment that is projected on the Mesa College campus would come from the existing and projected regional population as discussed further in Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*. Implementation of the CMP would not increase the off-campus population where school services are currently provided. While increases in the regional population could increase the demand for school services and require new or expanded SDUSD facilities, these facilities would not be necessitated by the increase in the on-campus population of Mesa College. Future on-campus housing would primarily serve students and would not be expected to generate a substantial number of school-aged children. A limited number of the students, if any, that would live in future on-campus housing proposed under the CMP would have school-aged children requiring service in SDUSD facilities near the campus. As discussed in Section 3.13.1.3, the children of students, faculty, and staff that live off campus would typically attend the schools designated by SDUSD for their neighborhood; therefore, these students would be spread throughout the school district. SDUSD would conduct environmental review of all new school facilities required to accommodate regional growth within their district, and compliance with federal, state, and local regulations would be required prior to the construction of the new facilities. Implementation of the CMP would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered school facilities or the need for new or physically altered school facilities.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would not require the construction of new school facilities or the expansion of existing school facilities. As the near-term projects would not directly contribute to population growth and rather would accommodate projected enrollment growth, the near-term projects would not increase the City's population of school-aged children or require expanded school facilities. Implementation of the near-term projects would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered school facilities or the need for new or physically altered school facilities.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered school facilities. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.13.4.4 Parks

Threshold 4: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for parks?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As discussed further in Section 3.14, *Recreation*, the District offers a variety of recreational facilities and programs on the campus in addition to the various City parks and recreational facilities in the surrounding area. While the campus population is anticipated to increase over the buildout period of the CMP and, therefore, increase the use of the existing campus and City parks and recreational facilities and programs, such growth would not exceed that expected for the region (refer to Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*). Projects implemented under the CMP would include the reconfiguration and/or expansion of existing recreational facilities and development of new recreational facilities on campus. The new and expanded recreational facilities proposed under the CMP would continue to provide students and surrounding community members with adequate recreational opportunities as the campus population grows.

The recreational opportunities provided for students and staff on campus may reduce the demand that campus populations place on public recreational facilities. As growth in the on-campus student population would not bring growth beyond that anticipated for the region, the project is not anticipated to result in a substantial increase in the demand for or use of off-campus recreational facilities that would not otherwise be developed or maintained using City funds. New residential developments located off campus are subject to the City's development impact fees, which contribute to the dedication of land for park or recreational purposes. The on-campus growth is not anticipated to substantially increase the use of City parks such that there would be a need for new or physically altered parks in the City beyond those planned by the City.

Although the projects proposed under the CMP do include new and physically altered recreation and open space areas on the campus, environmental impacts associated with those projects are analyzed throughout this PEIR, and mitigation is prescribed where feasible for potentially significant impacts. As such, the CMP would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered parks.

Project-Level

The implementation of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not require the construction of new public parks or the expansion of existing public parks. As the near-term projects would not directly contribute to population growth on the campus and would rather accommodate

projected enrollment growth, none of the near-term projects would require expanded park facilities off-campus. The Athletics Complex project would include the construction of a new athletics complex, relocated and expanded pool complex, beach volleyball, softball field, and practice fields. During construction of these facilities, the programs that typically use these facilities would temporarily increase the use of similar City or District sport facilities but not to an extent that would result in the need for new athletic facilities off campus. The near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered parks.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered parks. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.13.4.5 Other Public Facilities

Threshold 5: Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for other public facilities?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As discussed above, the City of San Diego Public Library currently operates 36 branches throughout the City. Although Mesa College provides students with library services at the Learning Resource Center (Building LR), students may also choose to utilize the various public libraries throughout the City. The Mesa College campus is identified within the San Diego Public Library Master Plan (City 2023) planning zone of Zone B - North/Downtown, where the construction of approximately 50,000 SF of library space to accommodate the population growth in this area is anticipated through 2040. As discussed further in Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*, the on-campus enrollment growth that is anticipated at the Mesa College campus would come from existing and planned regional population growth and would not draw new people to the region. Therefore, the growth projections upon which the San Diego Public Library Master Plan based these projected facility needs include growth in the region that would be accommodated at the Mesa College campus. The proposed new or renovated City libraries would be required to undergo separate environmental review in which feasible mitigation would be prescribed for potentially significant impacts. Therefore, the CMP would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public facilities.

Project-Level

The implementation of the near-term projects would not require the construction of new public facilities or the expansion of existing public facilities. As the near-term projects would not directly contribute to population growth on the campus and would rather accommodate projected enrollment growth, none of the near-term projects would require expanded off-campus public facilities. The potential environmental impacts associated with the public facilities proposed by the near-term projects

are analyzed throughout this PEIR and mitigation is prescribed where feasible for impacts identified as potentially significant. The near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public facilities.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered public facilities. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.13.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The provision of public services is generally specific to jurisdictional providers and therefore confined by service boundaries. Typically, changes in development influence the demand for public services to be provided within a local city, county, or service district. The geographic scope for analysis of cumulative impacts to public services is the City, which generally aligns with the service boundaries for SDFD, the City Police Department, SDUSD, the City's Park and Recreation Department, and the City's library services.

3.13.5.1 Fire Protection

Cumulative development projects throughout the City could result in an increase in demand for fire protection services and therefore result in the need for new or expanded fire protection facilities within the City. Similar to the project, cumulative development projects would not generate excessive fire risk as individual project design would be in accordance with applicable state and local regulations related to fire safety. Nonetheless, the environmental effects of future fire protection facilities are not known and would be determined during project-specific environmental review; therefore, consistent with the General Plan EIR, cumulative impacts related to future fire protection facilities are conservatively considered significant. As discussed above, the CMP's incremental impact, including the near-term projects, to fire protection services would be less than significant as fire protection services are provided by SDFD under existing conditions and the slight increase in building area and on-campus population would not substantially decrease the ability of SDFD to provide fire protection services or require additional facilities. Therefore, the CMP, including the near-term projects, **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to the provision of new or expanded fire protection facilities.

3.13.5.2 Police Protection

Cumulative development projects throughout the City would primarily be served by the San Diego Police Department, whereas police services on the Mesa College campus are provided by the District Police Department, with interagency coordination provided through an MOU. Cumulative development projects could result in an increase in demand for police protection services from the San Diego Police Department and could result in the need for new or expanded police protection facilities within the City. The cumulative development projects would be within the City and therefore served by the San Diego Police Department, which has target response times similar to the District Police Department. Should cumulative development in the City necessitate the construction or expansion of additional San Diego Police Department facilities to maintain these response times, the facility would undergo separate environmental review and feasible mitigation measures would be prescribed to reduce potentially significant impacts. Nonetheless, the environmental effects of future police protection facilities are not

known and would be determined during project-specific environmental review; therefore, consistent with the General Plan EIR, cumulative impacts related to future police protection facilities are conservatively considered significant. As discussed in Section 3.13.4.2 above, the CMP would result in less than significant impacts related to the provision of new or expanded police protection facilities. Therefore, the CMP, including the near-term projects, **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to the provision of new or expanded police protection facilities.

3.13.5.3 Schools

The cumulative development projects within the City could result in an increase in the population of school-aged children and could therefore require additional SDUSD facilities. Although the District is not required to pay school development impact fees, other cumulative development projects within the City would be required to provide these fees as applicable, which would allow SDUSD to build new or expanded school facilities where necessary. The approval for construction of such facilities would be subject to environmental analysis requirements in accordance with CEQA, and applicable mitigation measures would be applied to such a project. Nonetheless, the environmental effects of future school facilities are not known and would be determined during project-specific environmental review; therefore, consistent with the General Plan EIR, cumulative impacts related to future school facilities are conservatively considered significant. However, as discussed in Section 3.13.4.3 above, the CMP would result in less than significant impacts related to the provision of new or expanded school facilities. Therefore, the CMP, including the near-term projects, **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to the provision of new or expanded school facilities.

3.13.5.4 Parks

The identified cumulative projects could cause growth that leads to an increase in demand for public parks in the City. However, the identified cumulative development projects would be included in the growth projections upon which the City bases the planning of future parks on in planning documents such as the Parks Master Plan. Cumulative development projects within the City would be required to provide park fees as applicable, which would allow the City to provide additional park space to meet standards outlined in the Parks Master Plan. The approval for construction of such facilities would be subject to environmental analysis requirements in accordance with CEQA, and applicable mitigation measures would be applied to such a project. Nonetheless, the environmental effects of future parks are not known and would be determined during project-specific environmental review; therefore, consistent with the General Plan EIR, cumulative impacts related to future parks are conservatively considered significant. However, as discussed in Section 3.13.4.4 above, the CMP would result in less than significant impacts related to the provision of new or expanded parks. Therefore, the CMP, including the near-term projects, **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to the provision of new or expanded parks.

3.13.5.5 Other Public Facilities

Additional public facilities such as libraries could be required with implementation of cumulative development projects in the City. However, similar to the CMP, the potential growth induced by these projects would be included in growth projections used for the planning of additional library facilities in the San Diego Public Library Master Plan. The approval for construction of these facilities would be subject to environmental analysis requirements in accordance with CEQA, and applicable mitigation

measures would be applied to such a project. Nonetheless, the environmental effects of future public facilities are not known and would be determined during project-specific environmental review; therefore, consistent with the General Plan EIR, cumulative impacts related to future public facilities are conservatively considered significant. However, as discussed in Section 3.13.4.5 above, the CMP would result in less than significant impacts related to the provision of new or expanded public facilities. Therefore, the CMP, including the near-term projects, **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to cumulative impacts related to the provision of new or expanded public facilities.

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3.14 Recreation

This section addresses the potential recreation impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to recreation are also addressed.

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

Mesa College provides a broad range of recreational facilities, activities, and services that cater to the varied recreational and wellness needs of students, faculty, staff, and members of the surrounding community. The Mesa College Exercise Science, Health Education, Dance, and Athletics Department provides degree, certificate, and extracurricular programs in topics such as kinesiology, aquatics, dance, and health and wellness coaching. Mesa College also has 19 competitive sports teams, including badminton, baseball/softball, basketball, cross country, football, soccer, swimming/diving, track and field, volleyball/beach volleyball, and water polo. Non-competitive dance and exercise science classes are also available at Mesa College. The physical recreational facilities described below support these programs at Mesa College as well as providing space for unofficial recreational activities. As Mesa College students and staff do not reside on campus, a discussion of off-campus recreational facilities in the City of San Diego (City) that may be used by these groups is also provided below.

3.14.1.1 On-Campus Recreational Opportunities

The Mesa College recreational facilities are generally grouped together on the eastern side of the upper mesa, with steps down to fields on the mid-level. Facilities include a gymnasium, pool, baseball field, upper field (used as a practice field for softball and soccer teams), sand volleyball court, tennis courts, racquetball courts, and the Merrill Douglas Stadium (used for activities such as football and track and field). Mesa College also has an Exercise Science Center that offers a wide range of amenities to students, such as aerobics classes and a weight training room.

In addition to these developed facilities, Mesa College contains the Mesa College Interpretive Nature Trail on campus. The upper section of the trail wraps around the slope of the west side of campus for approximately 0.7 mile, from the South Trailhead south of the Center for Business Technology (Building BT) to the North Trailhead at the existing campus entrance at Chasewood Way. This trail provides a large display of labeled native plants, containing at least 42 native species (Mesa College 2024). The westernmost part of Mesa College's campus, the P-annex, also contains a community garden that is maintained by students.

3.14.1.2 Off-Campus Recreational Opportunities

Mesa College does not currently have students living on campus. As such, it is likely that many students, as well as faculty and staff, who live throughout the City use recreational facilities provided in off-campus locations. The City's Department of Parks and Recreation manages public parks and recreational facilities throughout the City. As of the preparation of the City's Parks Master Plan approved in 2021, the City's park system consisted of over 42,000 acres of parks and open space (City 2021), including several within approximately one mile of the Mesa College campus.

City-managed parks and recreational facilities within approximately one mile of the Mesa College campus include Kearny Mesa Community Park located immediately south of campus, East Clairemont

Athletic Area located approximately 0.5 mile west of campus, Linda Vista Community Park located approximately 0.6 mile south of campus, Mount Acadia Neighborhood Park located approximately 0.5 mile north of the campus, Lindbergh Neighborhood Park located approximately 0.8 mile north of campus, and Cabrillo Heights Park located approximately 0.8 mile east of campus (City 2025a).

Kearny Mesa Community Park offers access to a pool and recreation center. This recreation center includes a gymnasium, indoor basketball, indoor volleyball, and a game room. East Clairemont Athletic Area provides athletic fields used primarily for organized sports. Linda Vista Community Park offers access to a skate park in addition to a recreation center with a gymnasium, indoor basketball, and weightroom. Mount Acadia Neighborhood Park, Lindbergh Neighborhood Park, and Cabrillo Heights Park serve the surrounding residential neighborhoods and offer open space, picnic areas, and playground facilities.

In addition to these off-campus public parks and recreational facilities, the Department of Parks and Recreation manages open space parks with hiking trails (City 2025b). Tecolote Canyon Natural Park is the closest of these parks to the campus, with a trailhead accessible from the western side of Genesee Avenue across from the P-annex. Other nearby trailheads include an entrance off Acworth Avenue/Boyd Avenue just west of Old Meadow Road and an entrance accessible from Osler Street, both southwest of campus.

3.14.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of state, District, and local regulations that pertain to recreation is provided below. No federal or regional regulations regarding recreation apply to the project.

3.14.2.1 State

Quimby Act

The Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) authorizes local governments to establish ordinances requiring developers of new subdivisions to dedicate land for parks, pay an in-lieu fee, or perform a combination of the two. The Quimby Act also requires a city or county to adopt standards for recreational facilities in its general plan recreation element if it is to adopt a parkland dedication/fee ordinance. The amount of land dedicated or fees paid shall be based upon the residential density, which shall be determined on the basis of the approved or conditionally approved tentative map or parcel map and the average number of people per household. Mesa College is not subject to Quimby Act requirements because it is not a local government entity; however, park fees collected by the City support the development and maintenance of off-campus facilities that may be used by Mesa College students and staff.

3.14.2.2 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Sustainability & Climate Strategy

Section 1.3, *Sustainability & Climate Strategy*, of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes the Climate Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, Green Policies, and the District's Sustainability Levels.

Sustainability Plan

The following goal has been incorporated into the District's Green Growth program and shall be considered on future facility improvement projects and include the following related to recreation.

Health and Wellbeing Goal 3: Provide places where students can play, explore, experiment and find joy. **Key Performance Indicator (KPI):** Maintain a variety of interactive spaces (e.g., maker spaces, nature play areas, art labs, gaming zones, experiment hubs).

3.14.2.3 Local (Non-Regulatory)

While Mesa College is not subject to local land use planning documents, campus populations use off-site recreational facilities located throughout the City; therefore, a summary of City General Plan and Clairemont Community Plan strategies related to recreation is provided below with an emphasis on policies that are relevant to the District regarding to shared facility use.

City of San Diego General Plan

The Recreation Element of the City's General Plan guides the planning, development, and maintenance of the City's numerous parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities. Three main types of parks are defined, which include population-based parks, resource-based parks, and open space lands. Through the implementation of the Parks Master Plan, new policies that emphasize sustainable design, universal accessibility, and the prioritization of underserved communities were established. The General Plan also promotes an increase in joint-use agreements with schools and public agencies as well as new innovative recreational features such as mini-parks, urban plazas, and community gardens (City 2024). The Recreation Element of the General Plan includes the following policy that is relevant to the District:

RE-E.2 Work with local school districts, colleges, and universities to expand development of on-campus joint use recreation facilities including multipurpose courts, parking lots, and multi-purpose athletic fields.

Clairemont Community Plan

The Clairemont Community Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to enhance and expand recreational opportunities within the community plan area. It emphasizes enhancing existing parks and adding new neighborhood parks, mini and pocket parks, and linear parks. The plan promotes walkable and bikeable access to recreational spaces and further integration with public transit options. The Clairemont Community Plan closely aligns with the City's Parks Master Plan and the General Plan's Conservation Element to ensure sustainability goals as well as the projected population's recreational needs are met (City 2025c). Much like the General Plan, it also supports innovative recreational features such as dog parks, community gardens, and BMX tracks, and encourages partnerships with schools, agencies, and private entities to expand recreational opportunities through joint-use facilities. Policies 6.14, 6.24, and 6.31 of the Clairemont Community Plan Recreation Element, provided below, emphasize the potential for the City to increase joint-use facility opportunities as a way to expand recreational opportunities throughout the Clairemont community.

6.14 Pursue opportunities for new parks and recreation facilities through partnerships and joint-use agreements.

6.24 Support coordination with other public agencies including Caltrans, SDG&E and San Diego Unified School District to explore opportunities for new parks and trails, and to secure new joint-use facilities.

6.31 Strengthen partnerships with other agencies, non- profit groups, community partners, and the private sector to expand opportunities for joint-use facilities, including but not limited to parks, recreation facilities, gyms, pools, and recreational programming.

3.14.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential recreation impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant recreation impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or

2. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

3.14.4 Impact Analysis

3.14.4.1 Use of Existing Recreational Facilities

Threshold 1: Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The District offers a variety of recreational facilities and programs on campus in addition to the various City parks and recreational facilities in the surrounding area, as outlined in Section 3.14.1 above. While the campus population is anticipated to increase over the buildout period of the CMP and, therefore, increase the use of the existing campus and City parks and recreational facilities and programs, such growth would not exceed that expected for the region (refer to Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*). As detailed further under Section 3.14.4.2 below, both the long-term and near-term projects proposed under the CMP would include the reconfiguration and/or expansion of existing recreational facilities and development of new recreational facilities on campus. The existing recreational facilities and open space areas on campus have historically been utilized for recreational purposes by both campus populations and the surrounding community and are maintained by the District Facilities Services Department staff on an ongoing basis. The new and expanded recreational facilities proposed under the CMP would continue to provide students and surrounding community members with adequate recreational opportunities as the campus population grows.

Although additional student housing is proposed as a long-term project under the CMP, it would house a small percentage of Mesa College's total students, faculty, and staff; therefore, most individuals would continue to live off campus in the surrounding communities and use off-campus recreational facilities. Increased use of privately operated off-campus, for-profit facilities is not considered an adverse impact

because it is an economic benefit to those facilities and provides funding for ongoing upgrades that offset effects of increased use of such facilities. It is noted, however, that the extent of recreation opportunities provided for students and staff on campus may reduce the demand that campus populations place on public recreational facilities. As growth in the on-campus student population would not bring growth beyond that anticipated for the region, the project is not anticipated to result in a substantial increase in the demand for or use of off-campus recreational facilities that would not otherwise be developed or maintained using City funds. New residential developments located off campus are subject to the City's development impact fees, which contribute to the dedication of land for park or recreational purposes, as a condition for the approval of a tentative map or parcel map for private development projects. In addition, funding for maintenance of public recreational facilities is provided through property assessments and taxes that are distributed to the City, who is in turn responsible for providing and maintaining such recreational facilities in compliance with the standards outlined in the Parks Master Plan to ensure adequate and equitable recreational opportunities are provided throughout the City.

As the campus currently offers recreational facilities, the CMP would provide new and expanded recreational facilities, and off-campus recreational opportunities are available throughout the City, implementation of the CMP would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.

Project-Level

The near-term projects proposed under the CMP (the Athletics Complex project and Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project) would not cause a direct increase in the campus' population and, therefore, would not result in a long-term increase in the use of the existing campus and City parks and recreational facilities and programs. During the construction of the Athletics Complex project, the existing athletic facilities on this project site would be closed and would result in the temporary loss of recreational facilities on campus. Although this temporary closure would cause an increase in use of off-campus recreational facilities, this increase in use would be short-term and would not result in the substantial physical deterioration of these facilities. The near-term projects proposed under the CMP would include recreational facilities as further detailed in Section 3.14.4.2 and would enhance recreational opportunities provided to students as well as community members in the long term. The near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Future projects implemented under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not increase the use of existing parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.14.4.2 Expansion of Recreational Facilities

Threshold 2: Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Campus-wide improvements and long-term projects implemented under the CMP would include the construction and expansion of recreational facilities. These include, but are not limited to, projects such as bike paths, courtyard and open space areas, and outdoor play areas. Although projects implemented under the CMP would involve the construction and expansion of recreational facilities on campus which have the potential to cause an adverse physical effect on the environment, these potential impacts are discussed throughout this PEIR as part of the proposed CMP, and mitigation measures have been prescribed as feasible where potentially significant impacts are identified. No off-site construction or expansion of recreational facilities would occur such that implementation of the CMP would have an adverse physical effect on the environment beyond what has been described throughout the relevant sections of this PEIR. The potential for City-initiated park projects described in Section 3.14.4.1 that would serve planned increases in the City's population are outside of the scope of this environmental analysis and would undergo review by the City as these maintenance or construction activities are proposed.

Project-Level

Athletics Complex

The Athletics Complex project would involve the replacement and reconfiguration of existing recreational facilities, including athletic, exercise science, and dance instructional and support spaces. The existing Pool, Upper Athletic Field, 16,022-gross square foot (GSF) gym, and the original 28,577-GSF Exercise Science building (Building L1) would be demolished. A new approximately 175,000-GSF gym complex with court space, dance studios, athletic training spaces, offices, study areas, locker rooms, team rooms, weight rooms, classrooms, press boxes, ticketing/concessions and restrooms, stadium seating, and equipment storage space would be constructed to replace and expand these facilities. Relocated and expanded pool complex, beach volleyball, softball field, and practice fields are also proposed on the west side of the new gym building. The existing baseball field would be reconfigured and replaced with artificial turf, remaining generally in its existing location, and the field house located between the baseball field and stadium would be replaced.

Although the Athletics Complex project would involve the construction and expansion of recreational facilities on campus and would have the potential to cause an adverse physical effect on the environment, these potential impacts are discussed throughout this PEIR at the project level, and mitigation measures have been prescribed as feasible where potentially significant impacts are identified. No off-site construction or expansion of recreational facilities would occur as part of the Athletics Complex project such that an adverse physical effect on the environment would occur beyond those described throughout the relevant sections of this PEIR.

Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure

The Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would involve the construction of a new 140,000 GSF building comprised of a large main stage theater and theater support spaces. The Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would not involve the construction of new recreational facilities on campus; therefore, it would not have the potential to cause an adverse physical effect on the environment as a result of the construction of recreational facilities.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Future projects implemented under the CMP would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment beyond the impacts disclosed in other areas of this PEIR. **Impacts would be less than significant.** No mitigation is required.

Project-Level

The Athletics Complex project and the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project would not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment beyond the project-level impacts disclosed in other areas of this PEIR. **Impacts would be less than significant.** No mitigation is required.

3.14.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic area for the analysis of cumulative impacts related to recreation is the City. Changes in development typically influence the demand for recreational facilities which serve residents on a community-wide basis.

3.14.5.1 Use of Existing Recreational Facilities

The identified cumulative projects could cause growth that leads to substantial physical deterioration of existing neighborhood and regional parks or recreational facilities due to an increase in use. However, all cumulative projects within the City would be required to pay applicable development impact fees and property taxes, which would offset potential impacts to recreational facilities and provide the City with funding to provide repairs, expansion, or construction of new recreational facilities to adequately serve the community. Specific recreational development proposed by or necessitated by individual cumulative projects would be subject to environmental review, and if there is a potential for adverse physical effects on the environment due to the construction or expansion of recreation facilities, mitigation measures would be identified to the extent feasible. The General Plan, Parks Master Plan, and various community plans identify the City's plans to provide adequate recreational facilities as the population of the City grows. Therefore, as the enrollment growth anticipated for Mesa College would not draw new residents to the region beyond what is planned for the City, the CMP **would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution** to impacts related to the physical deterioration of existing recreational facilities.

3.14.5.2 Expansion of Recreational Facilities

As discussed above, on-campus population growth could result in an increase in use of the campus and City's various recreational programs and facilities. However, the increase in use would not require the construction or expansion of existing recreational facilities outside of the project site. Some of the long-term and near-term projects implemented under the CMP would include the reconfiguration and/or expansion of existing recreational facilities and the construction of new recreational facilities and, therefore, have the potential to cause an adverse physical effect on the environment. However, these potential cumulative impacts are discussed throughout the PEIR as part of the proposed CMP and, where feasible, mitigation measures have been prescribed where potentially significant impacts are identified for both the near-term and long-term projects. Cumulative projects proposing new or expanded recreational facilities would similarly be required to undergo environmental review and apply mitigation measures to the extent feasible if potentially significant environmental effects are identified. As the majority of cumulative development projects involving recreational facilities are anticipated to be redevelopment projects, environmental effects of these projects would be limited. Therefore, cumulative project impacts related to the construction or expansion of recreational facilities would be **less than significant**.

3.15 Transportation

This section addresses the potential transportation impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to transportation are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analysis in the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Analysis (Linscott, Law & Greenspan Engineers [LLG] 2026a), provided as Appendix I to the PEIR.

3.15.1 Environmental Setting

The Mesa College campus is located in an urbanized area connected to a network of local roadways, highways, and multimodal transportation options. Highways in the vicinity include Interstate (I-) 5 to the west, I-805 to the east, I-8 to the south, and State Route (SR) 52 to the north. Vehicular access to the campus is provided by Mesa College Drive on the east and by Chasewood Way, accessible from Marlesta Drive, on the north. Mesa College Circle is a two-way loop street that provides internal circulation through the campus and provides connections to parking areas. Parking is provided around the perimeter of the campus, primarily in a series of surface parking areas, and a parking garage located near the eastern campus entrance. Bus service is provided by the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS). The circulation network is described in further detail below (LLG 2026b).

3.15.1.1 Roadway Network

The existing roadways described below are those that accommodate the majority of campus-related vehicle trips. Their existing and planned configurations are described below.

- **Marlesta Drive** is an east-west facility and is unclassified in the Clairemont Community Plan. It is currently constructed as a two-lane undivided roadway. There are no bicycle facilities within the roadway. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Curbside parking is not permitted. The posted speed limit is 30 miles per hour (mph).

- **Genesee Avenue** is a north-south facility and is classified in the Clairemont Community Plan as a Four Lane Major Arterial north of Marlesta Drive and as a Two-Lane Major Arterial south of Marlesta Drive. South of Marlesta Drive, Genesee Avenue is currently constructed as a two-lane roadway with a two-way left turn lane. Class II bike lanes and sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Curbside parking is not permitted. The posted speed limit is 45 mph.

- **Mesa College Drive** is an east-west facility and is classified in the Clairemont Community Plan as a Four-Lane Major Arterial. It is currently constructed as a four-lane divided roadway. There are no bicycle facilities on this roadway near campus. Sidewalks are provided on both sides of the roadway. Curbside parking is not permitted. The posted speed limit is 30 mph.

- **Mesa College Circle** is an east-west facility and is unclassified in the Clairemont Community Plan as it is a private campus roadway. It is currently constructed as a two-lane divided roadway. There are no bicycle facilities and sidewalks are provided intermittently on both sides of the roadway. Curbside parking is generally permitted. The posted speed limit is 15 mph.

3.15.1.2 Transit Network

The existing public transit network accessible to and from campus consists of bus service operated throughout San Diego County (County) by MTS. Two MTS bus routes serve the campus, Routes 41 and 44, which are summarized below:

- **Route 41** runs between Fashion Valley Transit Center and the University of California San Diego. The route runs along SR 163, Genesee Avenue, La Jolla Village Drive, and Gilman Drive. There is a total of 35 stops along this route. Weekday service begins at 5:21 a.m. with 30-minute headways and ends at 11:07 p.m. Saturday service begins at 6:07 AM with 30-minute headways and ends at 10:09 p.m. Sunday service begins at 6:37 a.m. with 30-minute headways and ends at 9:09 p.m.

- **Route 44** runs between Kearny Mesa Transit Center and Old Town Transit Center. The route runs along Linda Vista Road, Mesa College Drive, Convoy Street, Clairemont Mesa Boulevard, and Complex Drive. There is a total of 31 stops along this route. Weekday service begins at 5:19 a.m. with 15-minute headways and ends at 11:34 p.m. Saturday service begins at 6:25 a.m. with 30-minute headways and ends at 11:34 p.m. Sunday service begins at 6:25 a.m. with 30-minute headways and ends at 9:49 p.m.

3.15.1.3 Pedestrian and Bicycle Network

The pedestrian network in the project vicinity includes sidewalks along surrounding roadways. There are missing sidewalks on both sides of Genesee Avenue south of Marlesta Drive and along both sides of Mesa College Circle within campus.

Existing and planned bicycle facilities are identified as Class I, Class II, Class III, or Class IV per the Clairemont Community Plan. These classifications of bicycle facilities are described below:

- **Class I (Bike Paths):** Include shared-use or multi-use bike paths for exclusive use by bicyclists, pedestrians, and non-motorized modes of travel. Class I bike paths are physically separated from vehicular traffic and can be constructed in roadway right-of-way (ROW) or exclusive ROW.

- **Class II (Bicycle Lanes):** Include one-way bicycle lanes defined by pavement striping and signage to allocate a portion of a roadway for bicycle travel. Striping may include a separated buffer from vehicle or parking lanes, and can include green paint to identify conflict zones.

- **Class III (Bike Routes):** Include bike routes shared with motor vehicle traffic in the same lane. Signage and street markings known as “sharrows” or shared lane markings can delineate that a road is a shared-use facility.

- **Class IV (Cycle Track):** Includes a hybrid bicycle facility that combines a separated path with a conventional bicycle lane. Cycle tracks are bikeways located in roadways ROW but separated from vehicle lanes by physical barriers, flexible posts, on-street parking curbs, or other objects and can provide one- or two-way travel for exclusive bicycle use.

The existing bicycle network in the project vicinity includes Class II bicycle lanes along Genesee Avenue (north of Marlesta Drive to east of SR 163) and along Linda Vista Road (between Stalmer Street and Mesa College Drive). Bicycle facilities planned in the vicinity of campus in the Clairemont Community

Plan include Class III bike routes along Marlesta Drive from Genesee Avenue to Beagle Street and along Mesa College Drive from Armstrong Street to Ashford Street. Class II bicycle lanes are also planned for Mesa College Drive from Ashford Street to Linda Vista Road. Linda Vista Road is planned to be improved with a Class IV cycle track from Stalmer Street to Mesa College Drive.

3.15.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to transportation is provided below.

3.15.2.1 Federal

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation, and telecommunications. To be protected by the ADA, one must have a disability or have a relationship or association with an individual with a disability. An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such impairment. The ADA does not specifically name all of the impairments that are covered. Numerous standards and guidance documents have been developed to facilitate the proper implementation of the ADA. The Department of Justice ADA Title III Regulation 28 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 36 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations and requires places of public accommodation and commercial facilities to be designed, constructed, and altered in compliance with the accessibility standards established by this part. The regulation includes Standards for Accessible Design in Appendix A of 28 CFR of Part 36, which establishes minimum standards for ensuring accessibility when designing and constructing a new facility or altering an existing facility.

3.15.2.2 State

Senate Bill 743

On September 27, 2013, Governor Jerry Brown signed Senate Bill (SB) 743 into law, changing the way transportation impact analysis is conducted under CEQA. Within the CEQA Guidelines, these changes include elimination of auto delay, level of service, and similar measurements of vehicular roadway capacity and traffic congestion as the basis for determining significant transportation impacts. In December 2018, new CEQA Guidelines implementing SB 743 (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3), along with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR; now Governor's Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation) Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts for CEQA, were finalized and made effective (OPR 2018). CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, and the associated Technical Advisory, provide that use of automobile VMT is the preferred CEQA transportation metric, and correspondingly eliminate auto delay/level of service as the metric for assessing significant transportation impacts under CEQA. Statewide application of the new VMT metric was required beginning on July 1, 2020.

California State University Transportation Impact Study Manual

The California State University (CSU) Transportation Impact Study (TIS) Manual was adopted in March 2019 to provide guidance in the preparation of transportation impact assessments for projects on CSU campuses, including all lands owned by CSU, consistent with the CEQA Guidelines update adopting VMT as the proper metric for assessing impacts associated with vehicular travel. The TIS Manual provides guidance to be used for projects ranging from campus master plan updates to individual campus projects, and for public-private development. As neither the OPR Technical Advisory nor the City of San Diego (City) provide detailed procedures for analyzing VMT for colleges or universities, the CSU TIS Manual is used as a technical framework for the VMT analysis prepared for the project.

3.15.2.3 Regional

San Diego Association of Governments Regional Plan

The San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG) serves as the region's metropolitan planning organization and forum for decision-making on regional issues such as growth, transportation, land use, the economy, and the environment. The Regional Plan, updated every five years by SANDAG, incorporates state requirements for a Regional Comprehensive Plan, Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). The 2025 Regional Plan continues the land use strategy of focusing future growth within the existing urbanized areas of the region, particularly in the western portion of the County along major transit corridors, to support transit use, walking, and bicycling. The 2025 Regional Plan focuses on reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through a combination of land use planning, expanded transit infrastructure, active transportation networks, and the implementation of transportation demand management strategies, including roadway pricing.

The 2025 Regional Plan includes a long-range planning horizon to approximately 2050 and identifies a comprehensive set of transportation improvements and policies intended to accommodate projected regional growth while supporting state climate and sustainability goals. Some of the 2025 Regional Plan mobility projects planned the vicinity of campus include the Kearny Mesa to Beaches Corridor - Genessee Avenue to Linda Vista Road bikeway, the Arterial Rapid Route 241 along Genesee Avenue, Local Bus 41 route from Fashion Valley to UC San Diego, and the Clairemont Mesa to Linda Vista Bikeway along Genesee Avenue (SANDAG 2025).

3.15.2.4 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Design Guides and Standards

The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes Section 2.1.11, which addresses accessibility planning requirements applicable to campus development. These guidelines require site-specific ADA plans that identify accessible routes, parking areas, curb ramps, building entrances, and other key features that support pedestrian circulation and access throughout campus facilities. These standards provide a framework for maintaining and improving accessibility as part of future development.

3.15.2.5 Local (Non-Regulatory)

While the District is not subject to local zoning or land use planning regulations, the campus is located adjacent to the public street network under the jurisdiction of the City. Future development under the CMP could include modifications to access, circulation, or other features within the public ROW. Some City transportation plans and policies therefore provide relevant context for evaluating potential transportation impacts, particularly with respect to circulation, multimodal mobility, and coordination with existing and planned transportation improvements.

City of San Diego General Plan

The City's General Plan establishes policies to develop a balanced, multimodal transportation system that supports walking, bicycling, transit, and vehicular travel. The Mobility Element emphasizes complete streets principles, prioritizes transit and active transportation infrastructure, and seeks to reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles. The General Plan promotes the integration of land use and transportation planning to improve accessibility and mobility throughout the City, including within the Clairemont Mesa area.

Clairemont Community Plan Mobility Element

The Clairemont Community Plan guides land use and circulation within the Clairemont community. The Mobility Element promotes a balanced, multimodal transportation system that accommodates pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and vehicles, consistent with Complete Streets principles. The plan emphasizes improvements to walking, bicycling, and transit infrastructure to enhance connectivity between neighborhoods, commercial areas, and regional destinations, while supporting reductions in vehicle travel. These policies support the development of a safe and integrated transportation network and provide context for existing and planned mobility conditions in the project vicinity. Specific roadway classifications and bicycle infrastructure improvements identified for the community plan area are identified in Section 3.15.1.

City of San Diego Transportation Study Manual

The City's Transportation Study Manual (TSM) provides guidance for evaluating transportation impacts for projects within the City's jurisdiction in accordance with SB 743. The TSM establishes VMT as the primary performance metric for assessing transportation impacts under CEQA and outlines screening criteria, thresholds of significance, and methodologies for VMT analysis; however, as noted above, detailed procedures for analysis of community college land uses are not provided. The TSM also provides the criteria for preparation of a Local Mobility Analysis to evaluate site access, circulation effects outside the scope of CEQA, and potential effects on the surrounding multimodal transportation network, including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit facilities.

3.15.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential transportation impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant transportation impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Conflict with a program plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities;

2. Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b);

3. Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment); or

4. Result in inadequate emergency access.

3.15.4 Impact Analysis

3.15.4.1 Circulation Programs, Plans, Ordinances, and Policies

Threshold 1: Would the project conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The project site is located within the Clairemont Community Plan area, where the surrounding circulation system is highly developed and includes existing and planned multimodal transportation facilities, including pedestrian infrastructure, bicycle facilities, and transit services. The project vicinity is served by a network of streets and multimodal facilities that support access to and from the campus.

Implementation of the CMP could result in modifications to campus access points, internal circulation, pedestrian connections, or connections to the surrounding street network. In particular, the future project that would affect the public ROW is the West Entrance project, which would involve modifications to existing driveways along Marlesta Drive to alter the main campus entrance from this roadway. Specific circulation and mobility enhancements proposed for campus in the CMP include internal pedestrian connections, bicycle paths, ride share drop off areas, and bus stops. Internal roadway improvements to add a bike path and parking along the southern loop of Mesa College Circle are also anticipated.

Potential conflicts with a circulation program, plan, ordinance, or policy could occur if these projects under the CMP were to physically conflict with existing or planned transportation improvements, such as designated bicycle lanes, pedestrian pathways, transit facilities, or other planned modifications within the public ROW. The internal circulation enhancements identified in the CMP would not result in conflicts with existing City plans as they would occur within the campus to enhance connectivity but would not alter off-site, public circulation. Implementation of individual projects that propose work within or affecting the public ROW would be subject to review and approval by the City and thereby required to adhere to applicable City policies for roadway design and traffic control. Through these processes, project design would be coordinated with existing and planned transportation infrastructure to avoid or minimize conflicts with adopted plans and facilities. Additionally, future development would be required to maintain safe and adequate access for all modes of travel, including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, emergency vehicles, as well as accessible routes consistent with ADA requirements. As a result, potential conflicts with the City's transportation system would be addressed during project-level design and permitting if they would encroach into the City ROW.

Individual buildings proposed in the CMP would be designed to adhere to the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, including Section 2.1.11 related to providing necessary ADA access. The

entrances to these future buildings would be coordinated with the existing campus network of pedestrian pathways. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not result in conflicts with adopted circulation programs, plans, ordinances, or policies.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would be constructed within the campus core and would not affect City roadways. However, they could result in changes to internal circulation through adjustments along the Mesa College Drive frontage and, for the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project, within existing parking areas. The design of each near-term project would accommodate revised circulation elements that are coordinated with the existing campus network of roadways, parking areas, bicycle paths, and pedestrian infrastructure. As the near-term projects would not affect public circulation infrastructure and would be coordinated with existing campus circulation patterns, the near-term projects would not result in conflicts with adopted circulation programs, plans, ordinances, or policies.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.15.4.2 Vehicle Miles Traveled

Threshold 2: Would the project conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The District, as the CEQA lead agency, has decided to analyze potential impacts associated with VMT based on the CSU TIS Manual because it is consistent with the CEQA Guidelines and OPR's Technical Advisory and provides comprehensive and relevant guidance for higher education land use types not otherwise available in City or OPR documents. While these guidelines were developed for projects on CSU campuses, they are considered applicable to this analysis due to the similar land use characteristics, commuter patterns, and travel behavior associated with public higher-education campuses.

Per the CSU TIS Manual, the following project types are not required to complete a full VMT assessment and impacts under CEQA are presumed to be less than significant. That is, VMT impacts associated with projects falling within one of the following categories would have a less than significant impact on VMT:

- Local serving retail that is less than 50,000 square feet, or retail that is located wholly within the core of a CSU campus;
- Childcare centers that serve students, faculty, and staff families;
- Student services facilities;

- Parking facilities that serve the campus demand and do not create "too much parking";
- Healthcare centers serving students, faculty, and staff;
- Recreation/fitness/wellness centers that serve students, faculty, and staff; and
- Projects generating less than 110 vehicle trips per day, as noted in the OPR Technical Advisory.

Further, the CSU TIS Manual describes that, in addition to the project types identified above, screening from a project-level assessment may be appropriate for other types of projects because certain characteristics (e.g., location) affect VMT such that it can be assumed those project types would not result in significant VMT impacts. Specifically, the following project types and screening attributes have the potential to decrease the number of trips and/or the trip length around their development, further decreasing VMT:

- **Development in Transit Priority Areas (TPA).** TPAs are defined as areas within a one-half mile of either an existing major transit stop (defined as a rail transit stop, ferry terminal served by either bus or rail transit, or the intersection of two or more major bus routes with 15-minute or better headways during the peak commute periods) or a stop along an existing high quality transit corridor (defined as a fixed route bus service with headways of 15-minutes or better).
- **Development in a low-VMT generating area of the city, sub-region, or region.** Low-VMT generating areas of the city, sub-region, or region can be identified by a transportation consultant by reviewing the VMT per person for the traffic analysis zone (TAZ) for the referenced region. If the proposed land use is consistent with what is currently in the study area and the TAZ is identified as generating less than the applicable regional or subregional VMT per capita average, then the project can be screened from project level assessment.
- **On-campus housing serving students, faculty, and staff.**

The Mesa College campus is predominantly located within a TPA, since it is located within 0.5 mile of bus stops for Route 44, which is a fixed route bus service with headways of 15 minutes or better. There are bus stops for Route 44 located at the intersection of Mesa College Drive and Armstrong Place. The small portion of the western side of the campus not within 0.5 mile of Route 44 bus stops is serviced by MTS Route 41. Bus stops for Route 41 are located at the intersection of Genesee Avenue and Marlesta Drive. The western portion of the campus is also shown to be located within a TPA as indicated on the City's Multifamily Residential TPA map. Therefore, campus development under the CMP would continue to occur within a TPA and is appropriately screened from a project-level assessment of VMT impacts.

Project-Level

As is the case for all projects under the CMP, the near-term projects would also be located within a TPA. The near-term projects would therefore also be screened from a project level assessment of VMT impacts.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in a conflict or inconsistency with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3(b). **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.15.4.3 Hazardous Design Feature

Threshold 3: Would the project substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The CMP would include the addition of a bike path and parking along the southern loop of the campus access road (e.g., Mesa College Circle) and would provide a new campus entrance road from Marlesta Drive. However, the proposed improvements would occur within the campus and existing adjacent roadways to connect already developed areas. The new campus entrance on Marlesta Drive would be designed and approved in coordination with the City where alterations within the City ROW would occur to ensure the proposed reconfiguration adheres to City roadway design standards. No change in land uses is proposed and the CMP would not introduce incompatible land uses to the existing campus. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not result in substantial increases in hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses.

Project-Level

Implementation of the near-term projects would similarly occur within the developed campus. No change in land uses is proposed and the near-term projects would not introduce new or incompatible land use types to the existing campus. Therefore, implementation of the proposed near-term projects would not result in substantial increases in hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in substantial increases in hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.15.4.4 Emergency Access

Threshold 4: Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As future CMP projects would be constructed within the campus boundaries, these projects are not anticipated to substantially impair emergency access to or from the campus. Staging of construction

equipment and materials is also anticipated to occur within campus boundaries. Roadways adjacent to the campus, including Genesee Avenue, Marlesta Drive, Beagle Street, Mesa College Drive, and Armstrong Street, would remain available for emergency evacuation (refer to Section 3.8, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, for additional discussion of evacuation routes). Long-term implementation of the CMP would result in minor adjustments along existing public roadways that border campus; however, such changes would be limited to driveway alterations that would not restrict emergency vehicle access. Future CMP projects within the campus would also be required to provide or maintain adequate emergency access in accordance with building code requirements, including those that address fire truck lanes, hose pull distances, and security systems.

During construction activities, however, there is potential for staging or construction to result in temporary changes to roadway configurations and access. For construction that would occur within the City ROW, such as for pedestrian alterations within City streets, the District would be required to obtain and comply with the condition of a Public Right-of-Way Permit to prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan to ensure emergency access is maintained on City streets. During construction occurring outside of City ROWs and within District property, construction-related road closures or construction areas could interfere with emergency access within the campus. The District would maintain emergency access by clearly delineating the limits of construction work and providing signage where temporary circulation changes are required; however, these procedures are not expressly mandated by law, absent a permit condition or mitigation requirement. Therefore, during construction, future CMP projects could temporarily impair emergency access during construction.

Project-Level

The near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not cause changes to City roadways as they would be constructed within the campus core. These projects would also be required to provide or maintain emergency access in accordance with state building codes. However, construction of the near-term projects could result in temporary changes to emergency access within campus. The preparation of an emergency access plan for on-campus circulation during construction is not mandated by existing policies. Therefore, on-campus construction could temporarily impair emergency access.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, could interfere with emergency access to campus through construction-period road closures on campus. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

TRA-1 On-Campus Construction Traffic Management Plan. In the event that the construction of a project requires a fire lane or roadway closure on campus or otherwise affects campus circulation, the contractor and/or Project Manager shall provide notification of this closure to the District Police Department; representatives responsible for Emergency Response Plan implementation; and campus community at large prior to construction. During construction, the District shall maintain continuous vehicular and pedestrian access across campus. If road closures would affect emergency routes, alternative routes shall be identified and directional signage shall be provided. If determined necessary by the District Police Department, the San

Diego Fire-Rescue Department shall also be notified. Appropriate signage and closure procedures shall be guided by the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

Project-Level

Mitigation measure TRA-1 would apply to the near-term projects.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure TRA-1 would reduce program-level and project-level impacts related to construction-period emergency access to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.15.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The study area for cumulative impacts related to circulation programs, plans, ordinances, and policies corresponds to the geographic extent of those documents, which generally encompasses the City. The study area for cumulative VMT impacts is also regional in nature and corresponds to the City. The study area for hazardous design features is local, focused on roadways adjacent to the campus, while the study area for emergency access is the City, reflecting the broader network of routes used by emergency responders.

3.15.5.1 Circulation Programs, Plans, Ordinances, and Policies

Cumulative development projects within the San Diego region would be required to demonstrate compliance with applicable circulation programs, plans, ordinances, and policies for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating environmental effects. Projects that are not consistent with these documents would require discretionary approvals, such as permits or plan amendments, and require environmental review under CEQA, through which conflicts and cumulative effects on the circulation network would be evaluated. However, as the project would not conflict with circulation programs, plans, ordinances, or policies, the CMP contribution to cumulative transportation impacts **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.15.5.2 Vehicle Miles Traveled

The CSU TIS Manual states that for projects screened from project-level VMT assessment, consistency with the applicable RTP must be demonstrated; otherwise, a cumulative level VMT assessment would be required to evaluate the project's effect on regional VMT. The applicable RTP for the San Diego region is the 2025 Regional Plan, which utilizes the SANDAG Series 15 Activity Based Model 3 Regional Plan for regional travel demand forecasting. Within this model, the project site is located within TAZ 1698. The RTP travel demand forecasting model assumes the continued development of the Mesa College campus with community college land uses through 2050, consistent with the CMP. Accordingly, implementation of the CMP is consistent with the RTP land use assumptions for the project area, and a cumulative VMT assessment is not required.

Cumulative development projects in the City would be required to comply with the City's Mobility Choices Ordinance (San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.1103 et seq.) and may require a VMT analysis in accordance with the City TSM. Projects that result in a significant VMT impact would be required to implement active transportation measures or pay the City's Active Transportation In Lieu Fee. Nonetheless, future projects in the City, especially those constructed in non-VMT-efficient areas, could

result in a substantial increase in regional VMT and result in significant cumulative impacts. As the project site is located within a TPA, it is presumed to have a less than significant VMT impact and the CMP contribution to cumulative VMT impacts **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.15.5.3 Hazardous Design Feature

Construction of future cumulative development projects in the City could result in the construction of hazardous design features; however, no cumulative projects are reasonably anticipated to result in permanent changes to nearby roadways or areas near the campus. These projects would also be reviewed for compliance with City regulations related to roadways and adjacent land uses, which is anticipated to be sufficient to avoid substantial conflicts or hazards. In addition, implementation of the CMP, including near-term projects, would not include features that would create a hazardous condition. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to hazardous design features would be **less than significant**.

3.15.5.4 Emergency Access

Construction of future cumulative development projects in the City could result in interference with emergency access during temporary construction activities that block access routes. Once operational, such projects would also be required to provide permanent, adequate emergency access in accordance with state building codes. No cumulative projects are reasonably anticipated to result in permanent changes to the nearby highways and arterials such that existing emergency access would be eliminated. Development within the Mesa College campus would not physically interfere with emergency access because the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not include features that prevent continued emergency access. In addition, the projects implemented under the CMP would be required to establish and maintain emergency access on campus during construction in accordance with mitigation measure TRA-1 or in compliance with City Public Right-of-Way Permit conditions to ensure that emergency access is maintained during construction. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to emergency access would be **less than significant**.

3.16 Tribal Cultural Resources

This section addresses the potential tribal cultural resources impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to tribal cultural resources are also addressed. This section relies on the information and analysis in the Archaeological Technical Report (HELIX 2026), provided as Appendix D to the PEIR.

3.16.1 Environmental Setting

3.16.1.1 Terminology

A tribal cultural resource is defined as a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and may be considered significant if it is (1) listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), or in a local register of historical resources; or (2) a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1(c). Refer to Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, for further discussion regarding the existing cultural and historical setting of the project area, including a summary of the history of the Kumeyaay people.

3.16.1.2 Tribal Cultural Resources

The environmental setting as it relates to cultural resources is described in detail in Section 3.4 of this PEIR, including discussion of the prehistorical and ethnohistorical context that applies to tribal cultural resources (Sections 3.4.1.1, and 3.4.1.2, respectively) and the methods for identifying cultural and tribal cultural resources (Section 3.4.1.5). The presence and significance of existing tribal cultural resources within the project site were evaluated based on a review of institutional records and previous studies within the project site, a records search conducted at the South Coastal Information Center (SCIC), a Sacred Lands File Search, Native American outreach and consultation, and a pedestrian survey that involved Native American monitors. As described further in Section 3.4.1.5, a pedestrian survey of areas of open ground on the project site was conducted on February 28, 2025, by HELIX staff archaeologist James Turner, with Kumeyaay Native American monitor Javier Dominguez from Red Tail Monitoring and Research. No tribal cultural resources were observed during the field survey. The evaluation of tribal cultural resources is in conformance with PRC Section 21082.3, the CEQA Guidelines, and statutory requirements of CEQA (Section 15064.5). To date, no tribal cultural resources have been formally identified within the project site that currently serve religious or other community practices.

3.16.1.3 Native American Contact Program

HELIX contacted the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) on February 18, 2025, for a Sacred Lands File search and list of Native American contacts for the project area. The NAHC indicated in a response dated March 4, 2025, that the search was positive and to contact the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians. Informal outreach letters were sent to Native American representatives and interested parties identified by the NAHC on March 25, 2025. No responses have been received to date.

3.16.1.4 Assembly Bill 52 Consultation

Pursuant to PRC Section 21083.3.1, the District initiated consultation pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 52 for the proposed projects being conducted for all four campuses: Mesa College, City College, Miramar College, and San Diego College of Continuing Education. Letters were mailed on December 12, 2025, to the following Native American Tribes that were identified by the NAHC as part of the contact program described above:

- Barona Group of the Capitan Grande
- Campo Band of Diegueño Mission Indians
- Ewiiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians
- Iipay Nation of Santa Ysabel
- Inaja-Cosmit Band of Indians
- Jamul Indian Village
- La Posta Band of Diegueño Mission Indians
- Manzanita Band of Kumeyaay Nation
- Mesa Grande Band of Diegueño Mission Indians
- Pauma Band of Luiseño Indians
- San Pasqual Band of Diegueño Mission Indians
- Sycuan Band of the Kumeyaay Nation
- Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians

The letters described the scope, location (including aerial and topographical maps), and nature of the long-range campus planning efforts and near-term improvements for each proposed project, and informed the Tribe of its opportunity to request government-to-government consultation.

The District is undertaking consultation under AB 52 with the three tribes who replied affirmatively to request consultation: Campo Band of Mission Indians (Campo), Jamul Indian Village (Jamul), and Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians (Viejas). Information resulting from these consultations has been used to help assess project impacts.

Campo Band of Mission Indians

On January 15, 2026, the Campo Cultural Resource Manager submitted a written response to the District requesting government-to-government consultation pursuant to AB 52. In its response, Campo requested additional information related to proposed mitigation measures, the presence of adjacent sites, and the types of ground-disturbing activities associated with the District projects. Campo indicated its interest in engaging in consultation to further discuss these topics and to address potential impacts to tribal cultural resources. The District has followed up with the Tribe to conduct consultation and provided draft Archaeological Resources Technical Reports; however, no further correspondence from the Tribe has been received and no consultation meetings were scheduled.

Jamul Indian Village

On January 15, 2026, the Jamul Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Cultural Resource Director submitted a written response to the District requesting government-to-government consultation pursuant to AB 52. In its response, Jamul expressed its request to consult on the proposed projects and identified its designated Tribal contact for further coordination. Draft Archaeological Resources Technical Reports were provided to the Tribe for review. A virtual Tribal consultation meeting was conducted on April 29, 2026, with representatives from the District, Jamul, and HELIX, the District's consultant. The Tribe was provided a summary overview of the proposed projects, cultural resources study methodology, and anticipated schedule for public review of the environmental documents for each campus. No conflicts with the findings of the Draft Archaeological Resources Technical Reports were identified by Jamul during this meeting. The District contacted the Jamul representative on June 24, 2026, to confirm no further comments or concerns remained, and consultation was concluded on July 24, 2026, as no further response was received.

Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians

On December 15, 2025, Viejas responded to the AB 52 consultation request, stating that they had reviewed the proposed projects and indicated that the project sites have cultural significance or ties to the Viejas Band. Viejas stated that cultural resources have been identified within or adjacent to the area of potential effects for projects involving ground-disturbing activities in undisturbed soils. Viejas requested that a Kumeyaay Cultural Monitor be present during ground-disturbing activities and that the Tribe be notified of any inadvertent discoveries, including cultural materials, cremation sites, or human remains.

For projects occurring within previously disturbed areas, Viejas noted that the project sites may contain sacred locations and requested that such areas be avoided where feasible and protected with appropriate buffer zones. Viejas further requested compliance with applicable federal and state laws related to cultural and tribal resources, including CEQA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and California Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, and requested immediate notification of changes to the projects or inadvertent discoveries. Viejas provided contact information for coordination related to monitoring and consultation. No request for further government-to-government consultation pursuant to AB 52 was provided.

3.16.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal and state regulations that pertain to tribal cultural resources is provided below. No regional, District, or local regulations regarding tribal cultural resources apply to the project.

3.16.2.1 Federal

See Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, for a discussion of federal cultural resources regulations. Cultural resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places may also be considered tribal cultural resources.

3.16.2.2 State

See Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, for a discussion of additional state cultural resources regulations. Cultural resources listed in the CRHR may also be considered tribal cultural resources.

Native American Heritage Values

AB 52 revised the CEQA Guidelines to include tribal cultural resources as an area of environmental impact analysis under CEQA. As a general concept, a tribal cultural resource is similar to the federally defined term Traditional Cultural Properties; however, it incorporates consideration of local and state significance and requires mitigation under CEQA. "Traditional" in this context refers to those beliefs, customs, and practices of a living community of people that have been passed down through the generations, usually orally or through practice. The traditional cultural significance of a historic property, then, is derived from the role the property plays in a community's historically rooted beliefs, customs, and practices.

Per PRC Section 21080.3, a CEQA lead agency must consult with any California Native American tribe that requests consultation and that is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project to identify resources of cultural or spiritual value to the tribe, even if such resources are already eligible as historical resources as a result of cultural resources studies. A tribal cultural resource may be considered significant if it is (i) included in a local or state register of historical resources; (ii) determined by the lead agency to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in PRC Section 5024.1; (iii) a geographically defined cultural landscape that meets one or more of these criteria; (iv) a historical resource described in PRC Section 21084.1 or a unique archaeological resource described in PRC Section 21083.2; or (v) a non-unique archaeological resource if it conforms with the above criteria.

3.16.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential tribal cultural resources impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant tribal cultural resources impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in PRC Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is:

    a. Listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k); or

    b. A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

3.16.4 Impact Analysis

3.16.4.1 Tribal Cultural Resources

Threshold 1: Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in PRC Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is (a) listed or eligible for listing in the CRHR, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in PRC Section 5020.1(k) or (b) a resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1? In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of PRC Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Ground-disturbing activities associated with implementation of the CMP have the potential to affect tribal cultural resources, including archaeological sites, traditional gathering areas, or other areas of traditional use. While there are no known tribal cultural resources within the project site, the Sacred Lands File search conducted by the NAHC was returned with positive results, indicating that sacred lands or Native American cultural resources may be present in the project area. Per AB 52, the District initiated consultation with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area to identify resources of cultural value to the tribe(s). As described in Section 3.16.1.4, representatives of the Campo Band of Mission Indians and Jamul Indian Village of California requested to undertake consultation and be provided additional information about the project in response to consultation invitations sent on December 12, 2025. Both tribes were provided with the project Archaeological Technical Report. No further consultation meetings with Campo occurred while consultation with Jamul was concluded on July 24, 2026, following an earlier consultation meeting with the Tribe. The Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians also responded, indicating the presence of tribal cultural resources in the project area and requesting a Kumeyaay monitor be on-site during ground disturbing activities.

Consistent with the analysis of sensitivity for potential unrecorded archaeological resources, tribal cultural resources are anticipated to have the potential to occur in previously undeveloped areas, as indicated by the moderate sensitivity areas shown on Figure 3.4-1. Areas of campus that have been disturbed by the construction of existing campus development are categorized as low sensitivity and are not anticipated to contain tribal cultural resources. Therefore, it is anticipated that ground-disturbing activities in moderate sensitivity areas associated with the implementation of the CMP could have the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource pursuant to PRC Section 21074.

In addition, due to the low to moderate cultural resources sensitivity of the project site and the lack of prehistoric archaeological resources previously recorded within the surrounding 0.5-mile vicinity, it is considered unlikely for human burials to have occurred within campus. However, while low, the potential nonetheless exists for unknown burials to be present, and ground-disturbing activities

associated with the implementation of future projects could have the potential to disturb human remains associated with local Native American tribes.

Project-Level

The Athletics Complex project and the Performing Arts and Administrative Center and Parking Structure project are both proposed within an area identified as having low sensitivity for unrecorded archaeological resources (Figure 3.4-1). As such, these near-term projects requiring ground disturbance in low sensitivity areas would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of archaeological tribal cultural resources. However, as described in the program-level analysis above, the potential exists for unknown burials to be present, and ground-disturbing activities associated with the implementation of the near-term projects could disturb human remains associated with local Native American tribes, though this is unlikely due to being located within a low sensitivity area.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP has the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of tribal cultural resources due to ground disturbing activities in moderate sensitivity areas. Ground disturbing activities across the project site also have the potential to disturb human remains. **Program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would not result in a substantial adverse change in the significance of tribal cultural resources due to being located in low sensitivity areas. Nonetheless, implementation of the near-term projects would still have the potential to disturb human remains due to ground disturbing activities. Therefore, **project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

Mitigation measures CUL-5 (in moderate sensitivity areas) and CUL-6 would apply to the projects proposed under the CMP. Refer to Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*.

Project-Level

Mitigation measure CUL-6 (refer to Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*) would apply to the construction of the near-term projects proposed under the CMP. As neither near-term project is located within a moderate sensitivity area, CUL-5 would not apply.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Program-Level

Implementation of mitigation measures CUL-5 and CUL-6 would reduce program-level impacts to tribal cultural resources to a level that is **less than significant**.

Project-Level

Implementation of mitigation measure CUL-6 would reduce project-level impacts to tribal cultural resources (human remains) to a level that is **less than significant.**

3.16.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic area for the analysis of cumulative impacts related to tribal cultural resources is the County as cumulative projects in the County have the potential to result in the substantial loss of tribal cultural resources reflecting the history of the Kumeyaay people through development activities.

Cumulative projects could involve ground disturbing activities which have the potential to disturb or destroy tribal cultural resources. These projects would be regulated by applicable federal, state, and local regulations; however, even with regulatory compliance, the loss of tribal cultural resources on a regional level may not be adequately avoided or mitigated through the methods specified in these regulations. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to tribal cultural resource loss would be significant. However, for projects proposed under the CMP, the implementation of mitigation measures CUL-1 and CUL-2 would reduce impacts to tribal cultural resources to a less than significant level. Therefore, the project's contribution to the cumulative impact **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

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3.17 Utilities and Service Systems

This section addresses the potential utilities and service systems impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to utilities and service systems are also addressed. Some environmental issue areas addressed in this section are further examined in other sections of this PEIR, including Section 3.5, *Energy*, and Section 3.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*.

3.17.1 Environmental Setting

3.17.1.1 Water

The City of San Diego (City) Public Utilities Department (PUD) is the water supply agency for Mesa College. The PUD and other local retail water distributors formed the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA) for the purpose of purchasing Colorado River water from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), a large wholesale water provider.

Metropolitan Water District

The MWD is Southern California's wholesale water provider. The MWD service area is approximately 5,200 square miles and includes the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Ventura. There are 26 member agencies of the MWD, including 14 cities and 11 municipal water districts. MWD owns and operates the Colorado River Aqueduct, and the Colorado River is one of their two main water sources. Under the priority system that governs the distribution of Colorado River water made available to California, MWD holds the fourth-priority right to 550,000 acre-feet per year (AFY; SDCWA 2026a).

MWD's second major water source is the State Water Project, owned by the State of California and operated by the Department of Water Resources (DWR). The State Water Project's supply originates in Northern California with water captured from the Feather River Watershed behind Lake Oroville Dam. MWD's contract with DWR provides for the ultimate delivery of 1,912,000 AFY, which is 46 percent of the total State Water Project entitlement (SDCWA 2026a).

MWD's existing water supplies have been historically sufficient to meet demands within its service area during years of normal precipitation, and while it manages reserve supplies to account for normal drought conditions, regulatory actions have placed limitations on its ability to provide water to its member agencies. In 2022, MWD requested and received delivery of human health and safety water supplies from DWR to partially meet the demands of member agencies in the northern portion of its service area. MWD's 2025 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) concludes that MWD has sufficient supply capabilities to meet expected demands under the single driest year and the multiple-dry year scenarios through 2050 (SDCWA 2026a).

San Diego County Water Authority

The SDCWA is one of the member agencies of MWD. SDCWA is the countywide wholesaler and is made up of 22 public member agencies across the San Diego region (SDCWA 2026b). SDCWA owns and operates five large-diameter pipelines to deliver imported water to its member agencies. SDCWA has embarked on a multi-year Emergency Storage Project, which is a system of reservoirs, pipelines, pump

stations, and other conveyance facilities intended to improve the County of San Diego's (County's) water storage capacity, and to allow stored emergency water to be delivered to SDCWA's member agencies during a prolonged regional interruption. The SDCWA Emergency Water Project facilities could be used to help deliver emergency water supply to member agencies during two- and six-month emergency events in which the County may not be able to receive regular imported water deliveries from MWD due to an event that renders their transmission system inoperable (SDCWA 2026a).

SDCWA's 2025 UWMP includes a summary of the total projected water supplies and demands within SDCWA's service area over 20 years (2030-2050) in five-year increments under normal, single dry, and multiple dry water years. SDCWA's reliability assessment demonstrates that with conservative assumptions regarding the availability of dry year supplies from MWD, the San Diego region's existing and projected water resource mix is increasingly drought-resilient and there would be no shortages anticipated in normal year, drought year, or multiple dry year projections in the service area (SDCWA 2026a).

City of San Diego Public Utilities Department

The PUD is one of the public member agencies of the SDCWA and provides drinking water to 1.4 million individuals, which is expected to increase by 4 percent over the next 25 years. The PUD's water system extends over 404 square miles and includes both potable and recycled water facilities. The City's water system has nine reservoirs, two water reclamation plants, three water treatment plants, 29 treated water storage facilities, and 3,700 miles of pipelines. In addition, PUD maintains and operates 49 water pump stations that deliver treated water from the water treatment plants to more than 321,000 metered service connections in 127 different pressure zones. PUD also maintains several emergency connections to and from neighboring water agencies, including the Santa Fe Irrigation District, City of Poway, and Olivenhain Municipal Water District (City 2026a).

The City's water system is split into three major service areas: Miramar, Alvarado, and Otay. The Mesa College campus lies within the Alvarado/Miramar service area (City 2026a). The Miramar Water Treatment Plant was originally constructed in 1962 and has a current capacity of 144 million gallons per day (mgd) of treated drinking water while the Alvarado Water Treatment Plant was originally constructed in 1951 and has a current capacity of 120 mgd (City 2026a).

In 2025, the City met about 72 percent of its supply needs with water purchased from the SDCWA and met the remainder of its demand from the City's local reservoirs, groundwater and recycled water. By 2035, it is anticipated that 29 percent of City water supplies would be water purchased from SDCWA, while the remaining demand would be met by local surface supply, Pure Water, recycled water, the City-Lake Cuyamaca Interagency Agreement, and groundwater (City 2026a).

The City's 2025 UWMP (City 2026a) serves as the City's overarching water resources planning document to address the City's water system, water demand, water supply resources, conservation efforts, and historic and projected water use. By 2050, the City expects to provide 70 percent of its total supply from local sources, effectively reversing the current reliance on imported water. The total water demand forecast under normal year conditions is 173,510 AFY for 2030 and 178,259 AFY for 2050. No water shortages are estimated to occur from 2030 through 2050 (City 2026a).

Surface Water

The PUD maintains and operates nine reservoirs that capture surface water runoff from rainfall within local watersheds that cover more than 900 square miles. Rainfall in areas east of the City where the City's large reservoirs are located can range from 15 to 30 inches per year. These nine local surface water reservoirs have a combined restricted capacity of 444,774 AF with consideration of California Division of Safety of Dams regulations. The native water captured in these reservoirs provided approximately 13 percent of the City's total supply between 2009 and 2025 (City 2026a).

The use of local surface water is affected by both availability and water resource management policies. The PUD's policy is to use local water first to reduce imported water purchases. The PUD also operates emergency and seasonal storage programs. The purpose of emergency storage is to maintain an accessible amount of stored water that could provide an uninterrupted supply of water to the City's water treatment facilities, should an interruption to the supply of imported water occur. The purpose of seasonal storage is to store surplus imported water in the wet winter season for use during the dry summer season. The PUD may also increase use of imported water, in lieu of local water, in the winter so local water may be saved in reservoirs or groundwater basins for summer use (City 2026a).

Recycled Water

While the PUD has historically imported nearly all of its water from the SDCWA, it also strives for more local surface water, recycled water, and conservation efforts to meet or offset potable demands. Recycled water is wastewater that has undergone additional treatment to make it suitable for a range of beneficial uses. Recycled water has been used in the City for almost 20 years and is produced by two water reclamation plants: the North City Water Reclamation Plant and the South Bay Water Reclamation Plant. The City's recycled water is suitable for irrigation and industrial processes, including cooling water towers, construction, ornamental fountains, flushing toilets, and wetland restoration (City 2026a).

The City's Pure Water San Diego Program, approved by City Council in 2014, is intended to provide a reliable drinking water supply that is locally controlled and drought-proof. The program will use advanced water treatment processes to turn recycled water into water of equal or greater quality than the imported sources (City 2026a).

Mesa College Campus Water Use

The Mesa College campus is served by a private 10-inch water loop that connects to City water mains in two locations. On the northwest side of the campus, the 10-inch water loop connects to a 12-inch water main, and on the southeast side of campus the 10-inch water loop connects to another 12-inch water main. Based on the period between October 2024 to September 2025, Mesa College consumes approximately 21.2 million gallons of water per year under existing conditions.

3.17.1.2 Wastewater

The City's PUD serves a population of more than 2.2 million wastewater customers. The City's wastewater system consists of two sub-systems: the Metropolitan Sewerage System and the Municipal Sanitary Sewer System. The Metropolitan Sewerage System provides wastewater treatment and disposal services for both the City and 15 additional agencies and districts. Its service area extends from Del Mar on the north to San Ysidro on the south and from Alpine and Lakeside on the east through the City. The Municipal Sanitary Sewer System is responsible for collection and conveyance of wastewater

from residences and businesses within a 342-square-mile service area. It includes approximately 2,945 miles of gravity mains, 112 miles of force mains, and 77 sewer pump stations (City 2025a).

The Metropolitan Sewerage System includes three wastewater treatment plants: (Point Loma Wastewater Treatment Plant [PLWTP], North City Water Reclamation Plant, and South Bay Water Reclamation Plant), as well as one biosolids processing facility, Metro Biosolids Center, and four large pump stations. The PLWTP has a treatment capacity of 240 mgd, the North City Water Reclamation Plant has a treatment capacity of 30 mgd, and the South Bay Water Reclamation Plant has a treatment capacity of 15 mgd (City 2025b). Currently, the average wastewater flow rate conveyed by the collection system is approximately 151.3 mgd to PLWTP, 13.5 mgd to the North City Water Reclamation Plant, and 6.2 mgd to the South Bay Water Reclamation Plant, while the Metro Biosolids Center receives and processes approximately 11,000 tons of dewatered biosolids per month (City 2025a).

Mesa College Wastewater Infrastructure

The Mesa College campus is served by a 10-inch sewer main that extends through the northern portion of campus beneath Parking Lot 1 and north of the baseball field and stadium. The sewer main connects to 10-inch sewer mains in the City right-of way (ROW) in the northwestern portion of campus near Marlesta Drive and in two locations in the northeastern portion of campus in Arillo Street.

Based on water use for the period between October 2024 to September 2025 and California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) default assumptions for indoor water use (assumed to be 100 percent wastewater), Mesa College produces approximately 12.9 million gallons of wastewater per year under existing conditions.

3.17.1.3 Stormwater

The City's stormwater system is maintained by the City's Stormwater Department. It consists of drainage and conveyance facilities such as underground storm drain pipes, culverts, outfalls, pump stations, open flood risk management channels, and more. This infrastructure collects and conveys stormwater and other runoff downstream. Storm drains are designed to handle normal water flow, but occasionally during heavy rain flooding will occur. The storm water conveyance system (underground conduits and street surface improvements) are designed to have the capacity to convey the peak discharge from a 100-year storm event without affecting properties located adjacent to the City ROW (City 2017). The Stormwater Department is responsible for the inspection, maintenance, and repair of the storm drain system in the public ROW and in drainage easements whereas individual property owners are responsible for maintenance of on-site stormwater features that capture site runoff. In addition, other City departments, such as the Parks and Recreation Department or PUD, may also have the responsibility and jurisdiction to maintain the drainage systems within their own facilities.

In general, stormwater runoff from the Clairemont Community Plan area, where the Mesa College campus is located, drains in three directions (north, south, and west) from four drainage areas of the Clairemont community. In the northern portion, stormwater drains to the San Clemente Creek, eventually draining into Rose Creek and then to Mission Bay. In the west, stormwater drains to Rose Creek, which drains to Mission Bay. In the south, where the Mesa College campus is located, stormwater drains into Tecolote Creek, which drains into Mission Bay. In the east, stormwater drains through the canyons of Mission Center Road, which eventually drains into the lower San Diego River. Stormwater

flows from the San Diego River and Mission Bay are ultimately discharged into the Pacific Ocean (City 2025c).

Mesa College Stormwater Infrastructure

Stormwater infrastructure on the Mesa College campus is comprised of a network of engineered slopes, curbs and gutters, catch basins, and other features located throughout the campus that capture, treat, and convey stormwater runoff towards open space areas or City stormwater facilities. The slope located west of Building C1 and Building C2 was recently improved in late 2025 with a 20-inch drain pipe (replacing an 18-inch pipe) and riprap that outlet adjacent to Genesee Avenue (District 2025).

3.17.1.4 Solid Waste

Solid waste generated throughout the City, including from Mesa College, is primarily sent to three regional landfills: Miramar Landfill, Sycamore Landfill, and Otay Landfill. According to the Solid Waste Information System (SWIS) database maintained by the California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle), the Miramar Landfill had a remaining capacity of approximately 11,080,871 cubic yards of solid waste as of January 30, 2020. Based on the remaining capacity and disposal rates, Miramar Landfill is expected to close January 1, 2031 (CalRecycle 2025).

Two other landfills, Sycamore Landfill and Otay Landfill, provide disposal capacity within the City. The Sycamore Landfill is located to the south of Marine Corps Air Station Miramar within the East Elliot Community Plan area of the City. The Otay Landfill is located within an unincorporated area within the City of Chula Vista. The SWIS database indicates that the Sycamore Landfill had a remaining capacity of 113,972,637 cubic yards as of December 31, 2016, and is expected to close December 31, 2042. The Otay Landfill had a remaining capacity of 21,194,008 cubic yards as of May 31, 2016, and is expected to close February 28, 2030 (CalRecycle 2025).

Campus waste at Mesa College is generally composed of municipal solid waste, landscaping waste, recyclables, surplus equipment, laboratory waste, electronic waste, and food waste. Waste generated on the Mesa College campus is either disposed or diverted. Methods of waste diversion at the Mesa College campus include recycling, composting, and source reduction (i.e., not generating waste). Solid waste is primarily disposed of in designated trash and recycling containers located throughout campus which the Mesa College facilities personnel regularly empty for transport to one of the three landfills identified above. In 2020, Mesa College composted approximately 16.34 tons of pre-consumer food scraps from campus cafeterias and coffee shops for use in the on-campus garden (Mesa College 2020).

3.17.1.5 Electricity and Natural Gas

As described in Section 3.5, *Energy*, the campus's energy sources include electricity and natural gas purchased from San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E). In addition, the central plant located adjacent to the Facilities building (Building L2) in the central portion of campus is comprised of an underground piping system which was designed to accommodate up to 2,000 tons of chilled water and 12,000 British thermal units (BTUs) of heating capacity. The campus contains a large solar network consisting of an array of rooftop and carport mounted systems. Electricity is supplied throughout campus via a network of underground cables and connections.

3.17.1.6 Telecommunication Services

Communications systems for telephones, computers, and cable television are serviced by private utility providers such as AT&T, Cox, Spectrum, and other independent cable companies. In addition, television services are available from two satellite services, Direct TV and Dish. Telecommunication facilities are located above and below ground within private easements throughout the City and are managed by the private utility providers. In recent years, the City has initiated programs to promote economic development through the provision of high-tech infrastructure and integrated information systems. The City also works with private service providers to underground overhead wires, cables, conductors, and other structures associated with communication systems in residential areas.

3.17.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of federal, state, District, and local regulations that pertain to utilities and service systems is provided below. No regional regulations regarding utilities or service systems apply to the project.

3.17.2.1 Federal

Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974

The Safe Drinking Water Act authorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to set national health-based standards for drinking water to protect against both naturally-occurring and human-made contaminants that may be found in drinking water. The USEPA, individual states, and water system service providers then work together to make sure that these standards are met. Originally, the Safe Drinking Water Act focused primarily on treatment as the means of providing safe drinking water at the tap. Amendments in 1996 greatly enhanced the existing law by recognizing source water protection, operator training, funding for water system improvements, and public information as important components of safe drinking water. This approach ensures the quality of drinking water by protecting it from source to tap. The Safe Drinking Water Act applies to every public water system in the U.S.

Clean Water Act

The Clean Water Act's (CWA's) primary goals are to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation's waters and to make all surface waters fishable and swimmable. The CWA forms the basic national framework for the management of water quality and the control of pollution discharges; it provides the legal framework for several water quality regulations, including the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination Program (NPDES), effluent limitations, water quality standards, pretreatment standards, antidegradation policy, nonpoint-source discharge programs, and wetlands protection. Refer to Section 3.9.2 for additional information regarding the CWA, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and NPDES requirements.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) gives the USEPA the authority to control hazardous waste from the "cradle-to-grave." Refer to Section 3.8.2.1 for further discussion as it relates to hazardous waste. The RCRA also set forth a framework for the management of non-hazardous solid waste. Regulations established regarding solid waste include a ban on open dumping of waste and set minimum federal criteria for the operation of municipal waste and industrial waste landfills, including

design criteria, location restrictions, financial assurance, corrective action (cleanup), and closure requirements.

3.17.2.2 State

Senate Bill 610

For certain types of large projects, Senate Bill (SB) 610 requires that the associated environmental document includes a discussion of the availability of water to meet the projected water demands of a project for a 20-year planning horizon, including single and multiple dry years. California Water Code Section 10912 specifies the types and sizes of projects that are subject to the provisions of this law requiring preparation of a separate Water Supply Assessment, which include developments that would demand more water than 500 equivalent dwelling units. California Water Code Section 10910 specifies that these requirements apply to cities and counties approving projects subject to CEQA; therefore, the District is not required to prepare a Water Supply Assessment and water supply availability is evaluated using the City's 2020 UWMP.

Assembly Bill 1881

Assembly Bill 1881, the Water Conservation in Landscaping Act of 2006, required DWR to prepare an updated Model Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance (MWELO) in accordance with specified requirements to conserve water through efficient irrigation and landscaping. By January 1, 2010, local agencies were required to adopt either the updated MWELO or a local landscape ordinance that is at least as effective in conserving water as the MWELO.

Urban Water Management Act

The Urban Water Management Plan Act was passed in 1983 and codified as Water Code Sections 10610 through 10657. Since its adoption in 1983, the Urban Water Management Plan Act has been amended on several occasions. Some of the more notable amendments include an amendment in 2004, which required additional discussion of transfer and exchange opportunities, non-implemented demand management measures, and planned water supply projects. Also, in 2005, another amendment required water use projections (required by Water Code Section 10631) to include projected water use for single-family and multi-family residential housing needed for lower-income households. In addition, Government Code Section 65589.7 was amended to require local governments to provide their adopted housing elements to water and sewer providers. The Urban Water Management Plan Act requires urban water supplier providing water for municipal purposes to more than 3,000 customers or supplying more than 3,000 acre-feet of water annually, to prepare and adopt an urban water management plan. Urban water suppliers must file these plans with DWR every five years, describing and evaluating reasonable and practical efficient water uses, reclamation, and conservation activities. As required by the Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Urban Water Conservation in California and AB 11, the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan Act incorporated water conservation initiatives and a Water Shortage Contingency Plan.

Integrated Waste Management Act

As discussed further in Section 3.8, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989 (AB 939), which is administered by CalRecycle, requires counties to develop an Integrated Waste Management Plan that describes local waste diversion and disposal conditions, and

lays out realistic programs to achieve waste diversion goals. These plans compile Source Reduction and Recycling Elements prepared by each local government, to focus diversion efforts and provide a framework to meet waste reduction mandates. The goal of the solid waste management efforts is not to increase recycling, but to decrease the amount of waste entering landfills. AB 939 required all cities and counties to divert a minimum of 50 percent of all solid waste from landfill disposal. In 2011, the state legislature enacted AB 341 (PRC Section 42649.2), increasing the diversion target to 75 percent statewide. AB 341 also requires the provision of recycling service to commercial and residential facilities that generate 4 cubic yards or more of solid waste per week.

Senate Bill 1383

SB 1383, signed by Governor Brown in September 2016, is intended to decrease GHG emissions and slow the effects of climate change by reducing the amount of organic materials in landfills. Beginning January 1, 2022, all California residents, businesses, and multifamily complexes were required to separate food waste and yard waste from their trash and recycle in a separate organic cart, and Tier 1 food generators, such as supermarkets and large grocery stores, were required to start donating edible food. On January 1, 2024, Tier 2 generators, including hotels, large restaurants, and schools with cafeterias, were required to begin food-donation programs, and CalRecycle gained full enforcement authority with the ability to issue penalties. By January 1, 2025, the state was required to achieve a 75 percent reduction in organic waste disposal from 2014 levels and recover 20 percent of edible food for human consumption.

Water Recycling Act

The Water Recycling Act of 2013 (AB 803) eliminates inconsistent recycled water spill reporting thresholds by making those in the California Health and Safety Code consistent with those in the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. In addition, AB 803 authorizes RWQCBs to permit the introduction of Advanced Treated Purified Water into conveyance systems prior to comingling with any raw water or other water source. The bill defines Advanced Treated Purified Water as wastewater treated by a method at least as effective as membrane filtration, reverse osmosis, advanced oxidation, disinfection, and engineered reliability features.

Water Conservation Act

The Water Conservation Act of 2009 (SB X7-7) required all water suppliers to increase water use efficiency. The legislation set an overall goal of reducing per capita water use by 20 percent compared to water provider-specific baseline levels by 2020, with an interim goal of 10 percent reduction by 2015. Effective in 2016, urban retail water suppliers that did not meet the water conservation requirements established by this bill were not eligible for state water grants or loans. SB X7-7 requires urban retail water suppliers to determine baseline water use and set reduction targets according to specified standards.

CALGreen

Refer to Section 3.5.2.2 for further discussion of the California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen; California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 24, Part 11), especially as it relates to energy efficiency and GHG emission reductions. Portions of CALGreen relevant to water use and solid waste are described here. CALGreen provides mandatory water efficiency and conservation measures for both residential and non-residential development. The mandatory measures specify allowable flow rates for

different appliances and require compliance with the MWELO (or applicable, more stringent local ordinance). CALGreen also requires at least 65 percent of non-hazardous construction and demolition debris is recycled and/or salvaged for reuse during construction.

3.17.2.3 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Sustainability & Climate Strategy

Section 1.3, *Sustainability & Climate Strategy*, of the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes the Climate Action Plan, Sustainability Plan, Green Policies, and SDCCD Sustainability Levels.

Sustainability Plan

The District's Sustainability Plan incorporates the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office's comprehensive Climate Action and Sustainability Framework, which includes the following goals related to utilities and service systems.

Water Conservation

- 2025 Benchmark: Benchmark potable water usage.
- 2030 Goal: Reduce potable water usage by 25%.
- 2035 Goal: Reduce potable water usage by 50%.

Waste Reduction

- 2025 Benchmark: Benchmark and comply with state regulations.
- 2030 Goal: Reduce total material consumption by 10%.
- 2035 Goal: Decrease consumption of materials by 25%.

These goals incorporated into the District's Green Growth program that shall be considered on future facility improvement projects include the following goals and associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to utilities and service systems.

Materials Impact Goal 1: Reduce waste going to landfill by 75 percent compared to current levels by 2030. **KPI:** Require contractors to submit waste tickets and documentation to verify diversion.

Water Impact Goal 1: Decrease water usage. **KPI:** Separate landscape from domestic water reporting. **KPI:** Implement rainwater capture. **KPI:** Use water efficient plumbing fixtures. **KPI:** Plant native and water efficient planting.

Water Impact Goal 3: Upgrade & Improve long term maintenance of utilities. **KPI:** Increase number of valves on utility loops to allow for increased maintenance access. **KPI:** Provide monitoring system of underground utilities. **KPI:** Eliminate waterless fixtures.

General Specifications

Section 2.2 of the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes general specifications and product and material data for the construction of District projects. These are expected to be incorporated into the design of future District projects; however, design professionals may work with

the District to include modifications to the general specifications via special conditions to meet specific site conditions and/or program needs. The following specifications are related to utilities and service systems.

Construction Waste Management and Disposal

General requirements outlined in this section include the implementation of a construction waste management plan to reduce the amount of waste going to landfills during construction. Contractors are required to provide a Waste Management Plan to Campus Facility Services that specifies the locations on campus where recycled materials will be collected, staged, handled, and picked up. Source separation of construction waste for recycling is required wherever possible. This section additionally outlines the waste reduction goals of the District, which include a minimum "end-of-project" recycling rate of 75 percent for non-hazardous solid waste, a further goal of 90 percent diversion from landfills and incinerators by weight, including both demolition and construction waste, and efficient material use and diversion of waste from landfills.

This section defines materials that would be recycled and salvaged during construction of District projects. These include demolition waste (asphalt paving and concrete); construction waste (masonry and concrete masonry unit, wood and sheet materials, metals, roofing materials, insulation, carpet and pad, gypsum board, piping, and electrical conduit). In addition, this section states that uncontaminated packaging materials (paper, cardboard and boxes, plastic sheet and film, polystyrene packaging, wood crates, and plastic pails) must be salvaged or recycled at a rate of 100 percent.

Sanitary and Storm Sewer Systems

This section defines goals and objectives related to sanitary and storm sewer systems on District properties, and states that the design of stormwater and sanitary sewer systems should involve coordination with state and local governing authorities and should comply with the Phase II Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit standards regarding stormwater discharge from the campus. In addition, stormwater shall be filtered through landscaping or other means whenever possible. Refer to Section 3.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, for additional discussion of stormwater pollution controls and permits.

3.17.2.4 Local (Non-Regulatory)

The District is not subject to municipal plans, policies, and regulations. However, the campus would continue to dispose of its solid waste at Miramar Landfill, and the following regulations are enforced by the City as a means to divert waste, in compliance with state regulations. The District also coordinates infrastructure needs with the City given the campus is dependent on certain City utility infrastructure. The projects implemented under the CMP would require connections to existing utilities within the City's ROW; therefore, the City's drainage and stormwater policies are discussed below.

City of San Diego Municipal Code

San Diego Municipal Code Section 142.0101 et seq., Grading Regulations, addresses slope stability, protection of property, erosion control, water quality, landform preservation, and paleontological resources preservation, and protection of the public health, safety, and welfare of persons, property, and the environment. Requirements related to hydrology include implementation of temporary and permanent erosion, sedimentation, and water pollution control measures from those outlined in San

Diego Municipal Code Chapter 14, Article 2, Division 2, Storm Water Runoff Control and Drainage Regulations.

City of San Diego Zero Waste Plan

The City's Zero Waste Plan, a component of the City's Climate Action Plan (CAP), was approved and adopted by the City Council on July 13, 2015. The CAP was updated in August 2022 and includes Strategy 4: Circular Economy and Clean Communities Measure 4.4, which calls for the City to update its zero waste plan. In the updated CAP, the City established waste diversion targets of 82 percent in 2030 and 90 percent in 2035. The 2015 Zero Waste Plan identified that the City increased its diversion rate from approximately 40 percent in 1995 to approximately 67 percent in 2013. In addition, the Zero Waste Plan discusses how the adoption and implementation of the City Recycling Ordinance (San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 6, Article 6, Division 7), Construction and Demolition Debris Deposit Ordinance (San Diego Municipal Code Chapter 6, Article 6, Division 6), and "a variety of other waste diversion programs" have moved the City closer to the goals outlined in the Zero Waste Plan.

City of San Diego Drainage Design Manual

The City's Drainage Design Manual (City 2017) provides policies and procedures to attain reasonable standardization of drainage design throughout the City. The Drainage Design Manual establishes design standards and design procedures for stormwater conveyance and hydrology analysis for flood management and water quality facilities in the City. These design standards and procedures provide guidance to design engineers, developers, contractors, and others in the selection, design, construction, and maintenance of stormwater conveyance facilities.

City of San Diego Stormwater Standards

The City's Stormwater Standards were developed to comply with NPDES permits administered by the state. To comply with permit requirements, the City is required to develop and implement stormwater pollution controls for private and public development projects for both the construction and postconstruction phases. Stormwater pollution controls, in the form of both structural and nonstructural best management practices (BMPs) are designed to reduce pollutants discharged from project sites to the maximum extent practicable. Refer to Section 3.9.2.5 for additional details.

3.17.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential utilities and service systems impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant utilities and service systems impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would:

1. Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects;

2. Have insufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years;

3. Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it does not have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments;

4. Generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals; or

5. Not comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

3.17.4 Impact Analysis

3.17.4.1 Relocation or Construction of Utilities

Threshold 1: Would the project require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Future campus development projects would require connections to the existing utility infrastructure within and surrounding the campus. More specific information about each utility type is provided in the following subsections; however, the overall procedure for determining the utility requirements for future projects applies to each utility. During the design phase of District projects, civil engineering consultants develop projections of project utility demands to confirm that existing utility capacity is available to serve the project in combination with existing campus and/or adjacent development. Based on the proposed projects largely replacing existing use types with more modern facilities, it is not anticipated that upsizing or replacement of off-site utility mains would be required. Rather, individual projects would connect to the existing utilities available within and surrounding the project site.

As these connections to existing infrastructure are anticipated to occur within the campus or in adjacent, disturbed areas to replace existing utility connections, potential impacts associated with construction of these utility connections are considered throughout this PEIR. Mitigation measures identified throughout this PEIR would be implemented during such construction, as applicable based on the proposed locations.

Where off-site connections to City-owned infrastructure rather than privately-owned District infrastructure are proposed, the District would coordinate with the City to provide the relevant demand and capacity information and receive approval to construct new connections in compliance with relevant City policies. As the projects would generally replace existing buildings with similar and upgraded facilities, these new connections are not anticipated to cause substantial increases in utility needs that necessitate off-site improvements to City-owned infrastructure capacity beyond new connections for the individual facilities. As no off-site infrastructure projects other than connections to existing infrastructure are currently known to be required to serve the proposed CMP development, further analysis of potential environmental impacts from off-site utility construction would be speculative. If future projects are determined to require additional off-site utility construction, the

environmental impacts of such a project would be required to be evaluated by the relevant lead agency and mitigated in accordance with CEQA.

Water

The Mesa College campus is located in a fully developed area of the City which is currently served by existing water infrastructure operated and maintained by the City's PUD. Campus buildings are served by a private 10-inch water loop that connects to City water mains. This water loop is used for domestic and fire water connections to campus buildings as well as for irrigation. The proposed development under the CMP would involve the construction of additional building space, which could result in an increase in demand for water supplies. Future water efficiency improvements that would occur through the redevelopment of older campus buildings would partially offset potential increases in water demand resulting from the increase in building area on campus. All campus development projects would adhere to state and District water efficiency policies, including Title 24 and related sustainability policies in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which require the installation of water efficient plumbing fixtures as well as the use of drought tolerant vegetation to reduce outdoor water use. The existing private water loop on campus is anticipated to have adequate capacity and pressure to serve the proposed CMP projects, which would connect to this existing water pipeline. The construction or replacement of water infrastructure would occur in accordance with the Domestic Water System requirements in the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual.

The construction impacts of providing water infrastructure connections to the proposed CMP facilities have been assessed throughout this PEIR and mitigation measures would be implemented during construction of utility connections where applicable. No relocation or construction of additional off-site water facilities that would cause environmental effects beyond those disclosed herein would be required. Implementation of the CMP would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water facilities which could cause significant environmental effects that are not already analyzed in this PEIR.

Wastewater

Wastewater generated at the Mesa College campus is currently transported to the PLWTP via a network of on-campus plumbing infrastructure maintained by the District, which then connects to existing wastewater conveyance infrastructure within adjacent City streets, easements, and ROWs. Connections to the 10-inch sewer main that traverses the northern portion of the project site serve the majority of on-campus development. Additional sewer connections to the campus network of wastewater pipelines and laterals would occur throughout the project site but would not result in the need to expand or otherwise replace this existing sewer main.

The potential environmental effects associated with the construction of future connections to sewer infrastructure are included in the analysis of the proposed CMP construction activities provided throughout this PEIR, and these connections would be constructed in accordance with applicable District standards. The Design Guidelines and Standards Manual includes the Plumbing and Piping System Requirements section within Section 2.2, General Specifications, which outlines plumbing design and construction standards to ensure safe, sanitary, reliable, and maintainable wastewater conveyance systems throughout all District facilities. As outlined in this section, all plumbing design and installations on District properties would adhere to applicable codes, District specifications, and regulatory agency requirements where applicable. Refer to Section 4.17.4.3 below for additional details regarding capacity of wastewater treatment infrastructure. No other new, relocated, or expanded off-site sewer

infrastructure would be required, and no associated environmental effects would occur beyond those considered in this PEIR for future sewer connections.

Stormwater Drainage

Stormwater on the Mesa College campus currently drains towards existing curbs, gutters, and landscaped areas throughout campus or within adjacent streets. With implementation of the proposed development under the CMP, stormwater would drain in a similar manner. As discussed further in Section 3.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, projects implemented under the CMP would incorporate low-impact development (LID) features and water-quality treatment infrastructure consistent with the requirements in the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual and state stormwater permit conditions. As the majority of future campus development would occur within previously developed and largely impervious areas, the overall quantity of stormwater runoff from the project site is not anticipated to increase substantially such that off-site infrastructure capacity would be exceeded. On-site stormwater capture, treatment, and conveyance infrastructure would be adjusted for future projects based on the required site-specific Water Quality Technical Report (WQTR) findings and recommendations. Further, as outlined in the Sanitary and Storm Sewer Systems section of the Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, stormwater drainage systems on District properties would be constructed in accordance with the California Plumbing Code, and in coordination with local authorities if connections to City-owned infrastructure are proposed. The anticipated stormwater improvements would be constructed within the project site and would not require new off-site drainage channels, culverts, or regional stormwater infrastructure. Therefore, the project would not result in the construction of stormwater drainage facilities that could cause significant environmental effects that are not analyzed throughout other sections of this PEIR.

Electricity

Electricity service to Mesa College is provided by SDG&E through a network of underground power lines throughout campus. Once projects implemented under the CMP become operational, electricity would be used in a similar manner compared to existing conditions, which includes electricity for interior and exterior lighting, heating and cooling systems, computer and office equipment, refrigeration and cooking equipment in dining halls, electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, and additional building operations such as security systems and elevators. As discussed in Section 3.5, *Energy*, annual electricity demand at CMP buildout is anticipated to increase from 1.2 million kilowatt hours (kWh) under existing conditions to approximately 9.6 million kWh per year based on the current rate of usage and replacement of natural gas functions with electrical equivalents. However, this is a conservative estimate as it does not consider future efficiency improvements that would be achieved by replacing older buildings and equipment with more modern facilities that incorporate sustainability features and use electricity more efficiently. The existing campus electricity distribution system is anticipated to accommodate the increase in electricity demand. Throughout the implementation of the CMP, connections would be made to the existing power lines within the campus to provide power to new or renovated facilities, the effects of which are addressed throughout the PEIR. Equipment replacement within the Central Plant, which occurs within the impact area considered throughout the PEIR, could also occur to accommodate the energy needs of future buildings. All new electrical connections to the campus distribution systems are required to be coordinated with and approved by the District Facilities Maintenance Department. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded electric power facilities that could cause significant environmental effects that are not analyzed throughout other sections of this PEIR.

Natural Gas

As discussed further in Section 3.5, *Energy*, Mesa College currently receives natural gas from SDG&E for the heating of buildings and water, other mechanical processes, and in laboratories. The District policy is for new buildings to be all-electric and not use natural gas for processes that can rely instead on electricity, such as building or water heating. Natural gas may only be used in select instances where electricity would not serve the intended use and with prior approval by the District Architect. The older buildings on campus are generally those planned for demolition; therefore, natural gas use would be reduced compared to existing conditions as many of these buildings currently use natural gas. As centralized building and water heating equipment requires replacement, these sources of natural gas consumption would also be replaced with electric equivalents, thereby reducing natural gas consumption. As implementation of future campus projects would result in a net decrease in natural gas consumption, implementation of the CMP would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded natural gas facilities that could cause significant environmental effects. Rather, buildout of the CMP would remove or cap a majority of the existing natural gas connections on campus.

Telecommunication Facilities

Telecommunication connections for the projects implemented under the CMP would be made to existing infrastructure that is located underground and throughout the campus. Throughout the implementation of the CMP, new connections would be made to conduit and junction box locations on campus and cabling would be provided within new buildings. The District Information Technology Services Department provides guidance to design teams based on currently available technologies to keep telecommunication services consistent across campuses. These improvements are anticipated to occur within campus; off-site infrastructure improvements by private telecommunication companies are outside of the scope of this PEIR. As such, implementation of the CMP would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded telecommunications facilities which could cause significant environmental effects.

Project-Level

Operation of the near-term projects would require water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electricity, and telecommunication services, but would be constructed in accordance with District policies and are therefore not anticipated to require natural gas connections. Consistent with the program-level analysis above, the near-term projects would be located within areas that are currently served by various service providers for water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electricity, and telecommunication services. As the near-term projects are constructed, new connections to each of these services would be required, the effects of which are analyzed throughout this PEIR as they would occur within the project-level impact areas. No alterations to existing off-site infrastructure would be required beyond these connections as the near-term projects would replace existing buildings with similar uses and connect to existing infrastructure. Therefore, the near-term projects would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which would cause significant environmental effects beyond those described in the project-level analysis throughout this PEIR.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment or stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. Mitigation measures for construction activities may apply; however, no utility-specific mitigation is required.

3.17.4.2 Water Supplies

Threshold 2: Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Based on water bills for the period of October 2024 through September 2025, the Mesa College campus consumes approximately 21.2 million gallons of water per year under existing conditions. To estimate the amount of water that would be consumed at full buildout of the CMP, the existing rate of water consumption per GSF of building area was calculated and applied to the future anticipated gross square feet (GSF) on campus. This determined that full buildout of the CMP would require approximately 30.6 million gallons of water per year, which would be a net increase of 9.4 million gallons per year (equivalent to approximately 28.8 AFY) compared to existing conditions. This estimate is considered conservative as future campus projects would adhere to state and District water efficiency policies, including Title 24 and related sustainability policies in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which require the installation of water efficient plumbing fixtures and drought-tolerant landscaping. The total amount of landscaped area requiring watering is also not anticipated to increase to the extent considered in this estimate, as campus is largely landscaped under existing conditions and, where additional landscaping is added, it would use drought-tolerant vegetation.

The City's 2025 UWMP demonstrates that there will be sufficient water supplies available to meet demands for existing and planned future developments and population increases that are projected to occur in the City by 2050 (City 2026a). The UWMP estimates water supply and demand in five-year increments over a 20-year period to determine whether available supplies will meet the City's projected water demand under normal, dry, and multiple dry year scenarios. Based on a normal water supply year, the estimated water supply will meet projected water demand between 173,510 AF in 2030 and 178,259 AF in 2050. Based on a single-dry year forecast, the estimated water supply will meet the projected water demand between 180,450 AF in 2030 and 185,390 AF in 2050. During a multiple-dry year scenario, the estimated water supply will meet the projected demands wherein demand is projected to be higher at the beginning of the modeled five-year cycle and then reduce as conservation efforts are enforced due to continued drought conditions (City 2026a).

As the demand for water supplies at Mesa College (approximately 28.8 AFY) would be a small portion of the City's overall water supply, which is obtained through a wide variety of sources to provide flexibility, and the increase in on-campus enrollment would come from the regional population, there would be sufficient water supply for full buildout of the CMP. The District also would continue water conservation

efforts to reduce water demand. The City would have sufficient water supplies available to serve campus development and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would involve an increase in building area on the Mesa College campus and could therefore require additional water supplies for indoor use and/or outdoor landscaping. Both of the near-term projects were included in the program-level analysis of water demand above and would represent a small fraction of total water demand projected for the City within the City's UWMP. As the near-term projects would replace similar use types with more modern facilities incorporating current water-efficient fixtures required by Title 24, these projects would represent a small change in campus water demand. The City would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the near-term projects and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry, and multiple dry years. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.17.4.3 Wastewater Treatment

Threshold 3: Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Implementation of the CMP would increase the amount of on-campus building space and the on-campus residential population. The number of on-campus students and employees is also anticipated to increase over the CMP buildout period. Such increases would result in the generation and discharge of additional wastewater from the campus, which would require treatment at the PLWTP, the municipal wastewater treatment facility operated by the City for wastewater from the project area. The following focuses on treatment plant capacity; refer to Section 3.17.4.1 above for further discussion of wastewater conveyance infrastructure.

As discussed further in Section 3.17.1.2 above, the PLWTP treats approximately 175 million gallons of wastewater per day and has a treatment capacity of 240 million gallons per day (City 2025b). In addition, the City's Pure Water Program is anticipated to decrease wastewater flows to the PLWTP by directing wastewater to the North City Water Reclamation Plant and then a new Pure Water facility for treatment to recycled water standards (City 2026b).

Based on the District water usage on campus between October 2024 and September 2025 and CalEEMod default assumptions for the ratio of indoor water use to outdoor water use for the Junior College land use type, it was estimated that under existing conditions the Mesa College campus uses

approximately 12.9 million gallons per year of indoor water (translating in part to wastewater). Assuming that wastewater that would be generated during full buildout of the CMP at the same rate per GSF as under existing conditions, full buildout out of the CMP would result in approximately 18.6 million gallons of wastewater generated per year. This represents a net increase of 5.7 million gallons per year or approximately 0.016 million gallons per day compared to existing conditions. This increase in demand would represent far less than one percent of the remaining daily wastewater treatment capacity of the PLWTP prior to decreases in daily treatment demand due to Pure Water and would be accommodated within the existing capacity of this wastewater treatment plant. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not exceed the PLWTP capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would involve an increase in building area on the campus and could therefore generate additional wastewater, though this increase is expected to be minimal as the near-term projects would replace similar existing uses on campus. Both of the near-term projects were included in the program-level analysis of wastewater demand above, which concluded that full buildout of the CMP would generate a small fraction of remaining wastewater treatment capacity at the PLWTP. As the near-term projects would represent a small portion of the full buildout of the CMP, the PLWTP would have adequate capacity to serve the near-term projects in addition to the provider's existing commitments.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would be accommodated by existing wastewater treatment facilities, which would have adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.17.4.4 Solid Waste Generation

Threshold 4: Would the project generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The solid waste generated at the Mesa College campus is currently sent to either Miramar Landfill, Sycamore Landfill, or Otay Landfill. As discussed in Section 3.17.1.4, the Miramar Landfill had a remaining capacity of approximately 11,080,871 cubic yards of solid waste and is expected to close January 1, 2031; the Sycamore Landfill had a remaining capacity of approximately 144 million cubic yards and is expected to close December 31, 2042; and the Otay Landfill had a remaining capacity of approximately 21 million cubic yards and is expected to close February 28, 2030 (CalRecycle 2025).

During construction, the projects implemented under the CMP would comply with all District and regional regulations regarding the disposal of construction-related material as discussed further under Section 3.17.4.5 below. Implementation of the plans and diversion strategies required by these regulations would prevent the majority of construction waste from being disposed of in a landfill.

Based on solid waste generation default values in CalEEMod for the land use types and size of projects proposed under the CMP, full buildout of the CMP is anticipated to generate approximately 2,605 tons of solid waste per year. Using the Volume-To-Weight Conversion chart for Campus Waste (loose) published by the USEPA, this would equate to approximately 57,861 cubic yards of solid waste per year (USEPA 2026). This amount of solid waste would be minimal compared to the remaining capacity of the existing landfills and would not exceed the remaining capacity of the existing regional landfills discussed above. However, each of the three landfills that the Mesa College campus's solid waste is currently set to have closure dates before the CMP operational year of 2045. The City is currently in the process of planning for these closures through exploration of options for new landfill sites, implementation of a resource recovery facility at Miramar Landfill to further reduce or recycle materials, and reductions in the overall pressure on regional landfill space by increasing waste diversion to 90 percent by 2035. Development of the projects proposed under the CMP would not impede the implementation of these City actions. In addition, as discussed further in Section 3.17.4.5 below, the projects implemented under the CMP would comply with all state and District regulations related to waste reduction and recycling, which would further reduce the amount of solid waste produced on the Mesa College campus that goes to landfill facilities. As such, implementation of the CMP would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would comply with all District and regional regulations regarding the diversion of construction-related material as discussed further in Section 3.17.4.5 below. As discussed in the program-level analysis above, full buildout of the CMP, which includes the land use type and building sizes of the near-term projects, would generate waste below the remaining capacity of the existing solid waste facilities to which solid waste generated on campus are sent.

The Athletics Complex project is anticipated to be operational in 2032, and the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project is anticipated to be operational in 2031. As such, solid waste from the near-term projects is likely to be disposed of at the Sycamore Landfill, which has a remaining capacity of approximately 144 million cubic yards and is expected to close December 31, 2042. The amount of solid waste generated by the near-term projects would be minimal compared to the remaining capacity of the Sycamore Landfill. Further, the near-term projects would comply with all applicable state and District solid waste regulations to reduce waste in landfills as further discussed in Section 3.17.4.5 below. Therefore, implementation of the near-term projects would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.17.4.5 Solid Waste Regulations

Threshold 5: Would the project comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

During demolition (where required), clearing and grubbing, and grading activities, the projects implemented under the proposed CMP would produce excavated soils, green waste, asphalt and concrete, and other construction and demolition waste. The types of demolition debris that would likely be generated during construction would include metals, concrete and asphalt, brick, masonry, wood, drywall, carpet and carpet padding, ceramic tile, roofing materials, doors, windows, and fixtures. In addition, the operation of new, renovated, and expanded facilities proposed under the CMP would contribute additional non-recyclable and/or non-reusable waste that would be deposited at Miramar Landfill.

The District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual identifies the goal of achieving a minimum "end-of-project" recycling rate of 75 percent for non-hazardous solid waste and a further goal of 90 percent diversion from landfills and incinerators by weight, including both demolition and construction waste. These goals exceed the minimum CALGreen requirement to divert 65 percent of construction and demolition waste from landfills. Projects implemented under the CMP would be required to implement construction waste management plans to minimize the amount of construction waste that is disposed of in landfills in compliance with CALGreen and the District goals for construction waste reduction. Further, the Sustainability Levels identify incentives for implementing sustainable procurement policies and using at least 30 percent recycled building materials, which projects under the CMP would implement as feasible.

In compliance with state laws and programs to divert solid waste from landfills, including AB 341, Mesa College provides recycling and organic waste disposal options on campus. Future projects implemented under the CMP would be supplied with the appropriate disposal containers and signage to continue these programs within new facilities. No new land use types are proposed that would result in noncompliance with solid waste reduction goals or regulations. The District and Mesa College would continue to implement, promote and improve the campus-wide comprehensive waste prevention, recycling, and diversion programs and would monitor the progress of existing programs to identify additional methods for reducing, capturing, and diverting more solid waste over time to achieve the diversion targets established under AB 341 and SB 1383. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would implement the District policies and goals for reducing solid waste during construction and operation, which are described in the program-level discussion above. During construction of the near-term projects, contractors would be required to implement construction waste management plans to reduce the amount of construction waste that is disposed of in landfills. Once operational, the near-term projects would be incorporated into the campus recycling program, as

outlined above. As such, the near-term projects would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.17.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The geographic scope for utilities and service systems is the service area for each utility provider. Although public utilities can be specific to jurisdictions, some service providers operate throughout the region and across multiple jurisdictions. Therefore, changes in development influence the demand for utilities across the region and could drive the need for new or expanded utility infrastructure.

3.17.5.1 Relocation or Construction of Utilities

Cumulative development projects throughout the City could require new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, stormwater drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities. Cumulative development projects within the City would be required to comply with City standards for the design, construction, and operation of stormwater, water distribution, wastewater, electric power, natural gas, and communications systems infrastructure, including requirements for capacity studies to plan for capacity increases where multiple developments would result in the need for new mains or other infrastructure. Construction of utility connections for new development or replacement mains would occur in compliance with the City's Environmentally Sensitive Lands Regulations, Historical Resources Regulations, and other applicable Land Development Code requirements, as well as any additional project-specific mitigation measures identified during environmental review of these projects. As projects implemented under the CMP would not have significant impacts related to the relocation or construction of utilities, cumulative impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.17.5.2 Water Supplies

Cumulative development projects within the City could increase demand for water that is not accounted for in existing water supply planning documents if they are inconsistent with the growth projections and land use information that informs the UWMP. However, as future community plan updates, specific plans, or other focused plan amendments are proposed, water supply assessments would be prepared to evaluate the availability of water supply, which would ensure that the water demands of planned or proposed development are incorporated into the City's water supply projections and accommodated by additional sources of water. In addition, based on the UWMP, the City has adequate water supply for normal, dry, and multiple dry years, and the minimal increase in demand caused by the projects under the CMP in combination with cumulative development projects would not cause the City to have insufficient water supplies available. Cumulative impacts related to water supplies would be **less than significant**.

3.17.5.3 Wastewater Treatment

Cumulative development projects that are proposed within the City could result in the need for new or expanded wastewater treatment facilities as no specific plans for additional wastewater treatment facilities were included in the City's latest General Plan, and the associated EIR concluded impacts to wastewater treatment facilities would be significant. Individual cumulative projects would be required to comply with the San Diego Municipal Code, the City's Sewer Design Guidelines, and PUD's Capital Improvement Program Guidelines and Standards, in addition to any additional project-specific mitigation measures. While PUD wastewater capacity planning is conducted on an ongoing basis to provide adequate wastewater facility capacity, without project-specific development plans to address future wastewater treatment demand from cumulative development projects, cumulative impacts associated with wastewater capacity would be significant. However, as implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would have a marginal increase in wastewater treatment demand compared to existing conditions that would be accommodated by the existing capacity of the PLWTP, the contribution of the CMP to this impact **would not be cumulatively considerable**.

3.17.5.4 Solid Waste Generation

Similar to the projects proposed under the CMP, cumulative development projects would generate solid waste through demolition/construction and ongoing operations, which would increase the amount of solid waste generated within the region. However, future projects in the City would be required to comply with City regulations regarding solid waste, including those intended to divert solid waste from existing landfills to preserve capacity. Additionally, citywide efforts to reach zero waste goals through the construction of new organics processing facilities would support landfill diversion and minimize demand on landfill capacity. Therefore, cumulative projects in combination with the CMP would not impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals and cumulative impacts associated with solid waste would be **less than significant**.

3.17.5.5 Solid Waste Regulations

Cumulative development projects proposed in the City would be required to comply with state and City regulations regarding solid waste, including those intended to divert solid waste from landfills and citywide efforts to reach zero waste goals. Certain projects would also be required to prepare and implement waste management plans to the satisfaction of the City. As the projects proposed under the CMP would additionally comply with state policies and District programs related to solid waste, cumulative impacts associated with solid waste regulations would be **less than significant**.

3.18 Wildfire

This section addresses the potential wildfire impacts that could occur during both construction and operation of future projects implemented under the CMP. The existing conditions and regulatory setting related to wildfire are also addressed.

3.18.1 Environmental Setting

3.18.1.1 Climate

Southern California, including San Diego County (County) and the project site, is controlled largely by the large-scale meteorological condition that dominates the west coast of the U.S.: a seasonally semi-permanent high-pressure cell centered over the northeastern Pacific Ocean, called the Pacific high, which keeps most storms from affecting the California coast. Areas within 30 miles of the coast in the San Diego region, including the project site, experience moderate temperatures and comfortable humidity.

The annual average maximum temperature in the project area is approximately 69.6 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), and the annual average minimum temperature is approximately 56.4°F. Total precipitation in the project area averages approximately 9.84 inches annually (Iowa Environmental Mesonet 2026). The predominant wind direction in the vicinity of the project site is from the west and the average wind speed is approximately 5.6 miles per hour (mph; Iowa Environmental Mesonet 2025). Hot, dry Santa Ana winds (which typically occur from fall through winter but may also occur intermittently in spring) are usually from the northeast and can produce wind gusts exceeding 50 mph. These winds result from episodic pressure gradients between high pressure over the Great Basin and lower pressure over the Pacific Ocean, causing offshore, downslope flow toward coastal Southern California, including the San Diego region (Murphree et al. 2018). Drying vegetation is possible during the summer months and becomes fuel available to advancing flames should an ignition occur.

3.18.1.2 Vegetation (Fuels)

The potential for wildland fires is a hazard where development occurs adjacent to open space or within close proximity to wildland fuels. Vegetation is important relative to wildfire as some vegetation, such as grassland habitats, are highly flammable, while other vegetation, such as chaparral and oak riparian forest, may be more difficult to ignite but would burn under more intense fire conditions. As discussed further in Section 3.3, *Biological Resources*, the Mesa College campus and its immediate surroundings are comprised of seven vegetation communities or land use types: disturbed southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, scrub oak chaparral, Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed), eucalyptus woodland, disturbed land, and developed land. Narrow areas of vegetation surround the campus to the north and east, with the most expansive areas of open space located south of campus.

3.18.1.3 Fire Hazard Classifications

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) has mapped recommended Fire Hazard Severity Zones for the County, and identifies responsibility areas for fire protection, including federal, state, and local responsibility areas. CAL FIRE maintains mapping datasets that estimate fire threat potential throughout California based on presence of flammable vegetation (e.g., fuel), topography, fire history, and climate. Based on these data, areas are mapped as Fire Hazard Severity

Zones and assigned one of three levels of fire hazard: moderate, high, or very high. Local jurisdictions may adopt the recommended hazard maps prepared by CAL FIRE as recommended or may increase the identified hazard area; local agencies may not decrease the hazard area from that recommended by CAL FIRE.

The City of San Diego (City) has adopted Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone (VHFHSZ) maps that add to the hazard areas recommended by CAL FIRE for its local responsibility area (City 2025). The majority of the campus, excluding only the eastern edge of campus where parking areas and the Design Center (Buildings Z1-Z6) are located, are within the area designated by the City as a VHFHSZ, as shown in Figure 3.18-1, *Wildfire Hazard Zones*. The City identifies all fire hazard zones as VHFHSZs and does not include moderate or high severity designations. It is noted that the central portion of the campus was recommended by CAL FIRE as a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, and the majority of the eastern portion of campus was recommended by CAL FIRE as a Moderate Fire Hazard Severity Zone (CAL FIRE 2025a). While these lower hazard classifications do not apply to future development from a regulatory perspective, this gradient across the project site from west to east is indicative of the fire risk from open space areas south and southwest of the project site being the main contributor to the VHFHSZ designation, with fully developed areas to the east posing less fire risk.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas are another designation given to areas of the state that are at risk of fire. The WUI is a zone of transition between wilderness and human civilization that experiences a heightened risk of wildfire. The interface areas of the WUI are where housing is in the vicinity of wildland vegetation while the intermix WUI is where housing and wildland vegetation intermingle. The influence areas of the WUI are locations where there is wildfire susceptible vegetation up to 1.5 miles from a WUI or intermix area. The northern edge and southeastern portion of campus are located within the interface area of the WUI, the center of campus and the southern edge are within the influence zone of the WUI, and a small portion of the western edge of campus is within the intermix area of the WUI (CAL FIRE 2025b).The WUI encompasses areas that are also within the VHFHSZ on the Mesa College campus shown in Figure 3.18-1.

3.18.1.4 Fire History

Fire history information can provide an understanding of fire frequency, fire type, vulnerable areas, and significant ignition sources. It is noted that the fire history presented in this section relies on the Fire and Resource Assessment Program database, which summarizes fire perimeter data dating to the late 1800s but is incomplete because it only includes fires over 10 acres in size and does not have complete perimeter data, especially for the first half of the twentieth century (CAL FIRE 2025c).

One fire has been recorded on the project site, which occurred in 1935 due to unknown/unidentified activity and burned approximately 3,678.4 acres. The campus was on the perimeter of this fire, which is mapped across the western half of campus (CAL FIRE 2025c). Although large fires have historically occurred in the region, including the 2003 Cedar Fire that burned approximately 270,686 acres and reached within two miles of the campus, the project site is within a heavily urbanized area where wildfires have been infrequent (CAL FIRE 2025c). The Cedar Fire was the largest wildland fire in California history, beginning approximately 25 miles east of San Diego in the Cleveland National Forest from a small human-started fire and quickly spread out of control and towards the City (City 2026).



Source: Aerial (SanGIS 2023)

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HELIX Environmental Planning

Wildfire Hazard Zones

Figure 3.18-1

3.18.2 Regulatory Framework

A summary of state, regional, District, and local regulations that pertain to wildfire is provided below. No federal regulations regarding wildfire apply to the project.

3.18.2.1 State

California Building Standards Code

Multiple parts of the California Building Standards Code (Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations [CCR]) address fire safety through building codes. The California Building Code (CBC), contained in Part 2 of Title 24, identifies building design standards, including fire protection systems and life safety standards for all buildings. Typical fire safety requirements of the CBC include the installation of fire sprinklers in all new high-rise buildings; the establishment of fire resistance standards for fire doors, building materials, and particular types of construction; and provision of smoke detectors. Updates in CBC Chapter 10 enacted in 2022 refined egress requirements to ensure safe evacuation during fire events. The enhancements focus on clearer pathways and improved access points for emergency response personnel to minimize evacuation time and ensure access for firefighting teams during emergencies.

Title 24, Part 7, Materials and Construction Methods for Exterior Wildfire Exposure, also known as the California Wildland Urban Interface Code (CWUIC) prescribes building materials and construction methods for new buildings in a VHFHSZ or WUI. These standards establish requirements that enhance fire resistance and mitigate fire spread from wildfires into developed areas to reduce the likelihood of property or life loss during fires. Part 7 contains building material requirements for roofing; attic ventilation; exterior walls; exterior windows and glazing; exterior doors; decking; protection of underfloor, appendages, and floor projections; and ancillary structures. Other standards require exterior defensible space, adequate water supply for firefighting, and a fire protection plan.

The California Fire Code (CFC), Title 24, Part 9, incorporates, by adoption, the International Fire Code of the International Code Council, with California amendments. The CFC includes provisions and standards for emergency planning and preparedness, fire service features, fire protection systems, hazardous materials, fire flow requirements, and fire hydrant locations and distribution. The CFC standards enhance safety and accessibility for firefighters and other emergency responders during emergency events.

California Public Resources Code

Fire Hazard Severity Zones

Public Resources Code (PRC) Sections 4201 through 4204 apply to State Responsibility Areas, and Government Code Sections 51175 to 51189 direct CAL FIRE to map areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors. The Fire Hazard Severity Zone maps are used to direct the application of various mitigation strategies to reduce the risk associated with wildland fires. Fire hazard designations are based on topography, vegetation, and weather, among other factors, with higher hazard category sites including steep terrain, unmaintained fuels/vegetation, and WUI locations. CAL FIRE also provides fire hazard designation recommendations for local jurisdictions based on these data. Projects situated in VHFHSZs require fire hazard analysis and application of fire protection

measures that have been developed to specifically result in defensible communities in these WUI locations.

California Strategic Fire Plan

The California Strategic Fire Plan, developed and adopted in response to PRC Sections 4114 and 4130, is a cooperative effort between the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and CAL FIRE. By placing emphasis on what needs to be done long before a fire starts, the California Strategic Fire Plan looks to reduce firefighting costs and property losses, increase firefighter safety, and contribute to ecosystem health. The Strategic Fire Plan has a vision for a natural environment that is more fire resilient, buildings and infrastructure that are more fire resistant, and a society that is more aware of and responsive to the benefits and threats of wildland fire. These goals would be achieved through local, state, federal, tribal, and private partnerships (CAL FIRE 2018).

3.18.2.2 Regional

County of San Diego Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan

The purpose of the County's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (County 2023) is to identify the County's hazards, review and assess past disaster occurrences, estimate the probability of future occurrences, and set goals to mitigate potential risks to reduce or eliminate long-term risk to people and property from natural and human-made hazards. In order to qualify for hazard mitigation funding, this type of plan is also required by the federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The plan was last revised in 2023 to reflect changes to the hazards threatening San Diego County and the programs in place to minimize or eliminate those hazards. An important component of the plan is the Community Emergency Response Team, which educates community members about disaster preparedness and trains them in basic response skills, such as fire safety, light search and rescue, and disaster medical operations. The Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan is a collaborative effort among various jurisdictions within the County, and it includes input and coordination with local entities, including the City of San Diego Fire-Rescue Department (SDFD).

County of San Diego Emergency Operations Plan

The County's Emergency Operations Plan was approved in August 2022 and provides a framework for emergency response within the County. The Emergency Operations Plan outlines procedures for safe and effective evacuation during emergencies, including the importance of identifying evacuation routes and ensuring public awareness of these routes through communication systems. The Emergency Operations Plan also outlines roles and responsibilities for law enforcement, fire service, and public health personnel during emergencies to streamline evacuation and emergency response efforts.

The Emergency Operations Plan dictates who is responsible for a large-scale evacuation effort and how regional resources will be requested and coordinated (County 2022). First responders are responsible for determining initial protective actions before the Emergency Operations Center and emergency management personnel have an opportunity to convene and gain situational awareness. Initial protective actions are shared and communicated to local Emergency Operations Centers and necessary support agencies as soon as possible to ensure an effective, coordinated evacuation. During an evacuation effort, the designated County Evacuation Coordinator is the County Sheriff, who is also the Law Enforcement Coordinator. The County Evacuation Coordinator is assisted by other law enforcement and support agencies. While Mesa College and the District are not signatories to the Emergency

Operations Plan, this plan is relevant to regional response efforts that involve mutual aid between jurisdictions. The SDFD, which serves as the campus fire protection agency, is part of the mutual aid network outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan.

3.18.2.3 District

District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual

Design Guides and Standards

Section 2.1, Design Guides and Standards, includes guidelines for the design of facilities on the District campuses. Related to wildfire, all District facilities are required to be designed and constructed in compliance with the CFC, including requirements for fire resistant wall assemblies. Fire access roads are also required to meet the standards of the CBC.

Projects are required to provide a fire accessibility site plan showing features such as access gates, fire hydrants, and sprinkler risers. A fire flow test from the six months prior to submittal to the Division of the State Architect (DSA) is also required to demonstrate adequate fire flow is available. DSA also requires a local fire authority review approval of the fire accessibility site plan.

District Board Policies and Administrative Procedures

Board Policies 3505 (Emergency Response Plan) and 7415 (Fire, Earthquake, and Disaster Safety) direct the Chancellor to establish procedures that ensure that the District implements a plan to be activated in the event of an emergency or the occurrence of a natural disaster or hazardous condition. This plan must comply with the National Incident Management System and the Standardized Emergency Management System, and should incorporate the functions and principles of the Incident Command System, the Master Mutual Aid Agreement, and other relevant programs. The plan must also identify training requirements for District employees depending on their assigned roles within the emergency plan.

The communications requirement of this Board Policy is implemented by Administrative Procedure 7415.2 (Emergency Communications), which establishes specific procedures to ensure dissemination of information to students, employees, and the community in a consistent and effective manner in the event of an emergency. The Emergency Communications Response Plan defines what qualifies as an emergency, identifies who is responsible for initiating notifications, and specifies the communication systems that may be used, such as mass-notification platforms capable of delivering calls, texts, and emails. Following an emergency, the District Chancellor and/or President would reconvene the emergency team and review the process and situational response for continuous improvement of the District's emergency response.

Mesa College Emergency Response Program

Mesa College has developed the Emergency Management Program which implements the Board Policies outlined above and is a strategic framework dedicated to protecting students, faculty, employees, and campus assets from natural, technological, and human-caused hazards through the development of comprehensive preparation plans for emergency situations. These include the Building Emergency Evacuation Plans for each building in addition to detailed instructions for a variety of emergency

situations which could occur on campus (earthquake, fire, disease, chemical spill, etc.) and are each provided on the Mesa College website (Mesa College 2026).

San Diego Mesa College Fire Prevention Plan

The Mesa College Fire Prevention Plan establishes the campus' comprehensive approach to preventing fires by defining responsibilities for Risk Management staff, Facilities Services staff, and other supervisors and employees; outlining housekeeping and safety practices; and detailing strict regulations for flammable liquids, electrical systems, welding, kilns, seasonal decorations, and other potential ignition sources. The plan details required fire-suppression equipment, inspection schedules, and maintenance procedures, and it mandates regular employee training, especially in fire extinguisher use, to ensure preparedness. It also includes appendices with definitions, safe-work practices, and inspection checklists, creating a structured framework to minimize fire risks and maintain compliance with state and federal safety standards (Mesa College 2025).

3.18.2.4 Local (Non-Regulatory)

Although the District is not subject to local development regulations, the Mesa College campus is located adjacent to properties within the City that would be subject to the City's brush management requirements, which are outlined below for reference.

City of San Diego Municipal Code

Section 142.0412 of the San Diego Municipal Code sets forth brush management requirements to reduce the risk of fire hazards. Brush management is required on publicly or privately owned land that is within 100 feet of a structure and contains native or naturalized vegetation. Three defensible space zones are established. The Building Ignition Resistance Zone is a 5-foot-wide space extending out from the exterior building wall where no combustible materials are allowed. Brush Management Zone One extends from 5 to 35 feet from exterior walls. All native vegetation must be removed and replaced by approved and irrigated landscaping. Brush Management Zone Two extends 35 to 100 feet from exterior walls. Within Zone Two, 50 percent removal of native vegetation and 50 percent thinning of remaining vegetation is required; Zone Two is required to be maintained on a regular basis by pruning and thinning plants, removing invasive species, and controlling weeds. Although Mesa College is not subject to the San Diego Municipal Code, the City's brush management requirements are similar to those contained in the CWUIC, which establish Zone One within 5 to 30 feet from exterior walls and Zone Two between 30 and 100 feet from exterior walls.

3.18.3 Thresholds of Significance

Thresholds used to evaluate potential wildfire impacts are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. A significant wildfire impact could occur if implementation of the proposed project would occur within or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as VHFHSZs and would:

1. Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan;

2. Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire;

3. Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment; or

4. Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

As described in Section 3.18.1.3 and shown in Figure 3.18-1, portions of the campus are within or adjacent to VHFHSZ areas mapped for a Local Responsibility Area. Therefore, each of the Appendix G thresholds apply to the project location and potential effects of the project are evaluated in the following impact analysis.

3.18.4 Impact Analysis

3.18.4.1 Emergency Plans

Threshold 1: Would the project substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

As future CMP projects would be constructed within the campus boundaries, construction work would not substantially impair emergency response or evacuation plans which direct evacuation towards major City roads. As discussed further in Section 3.8.1.2, the County's Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan has identified evacuation routes near the Mesa College campus that include Genessee Avenue and portions of Marlesta Drive, Beagle Street, Mesa College Drive, and Armstrong Street. For CMP projects that require work within the City right-of-way (ROW), such as connections to existing utilities adjacent to campus or campus entrance alterations in City streets, the District would be required to obtain and comply with the conditions of a Public Right-of-Way Permit to prepare and implement a Traffic Control Plan in accordance with City policies to ensure emergency access is maintained on City streets. During construction of projects occurring within the campus boundaries, construction-related road closures or access alterations could interfere with emergency response. While the District intends to maintain emergency access throughout campus by clearly delineating the limits of construction work and providing signage where temporary circulation changes are required, these procedures are not mandated by law. Therefore, during construction, future CMP projects could temporarily impair emergency response or evacuation plans.

Once operational, CMP projects would implement District policies that address emergency situations. As described in Section 3.18.2.3, the District has developed Board Policies 3505 (Emergency Response Plan) and 7415 (Fire, Earthquake, and Disaster Safety) that ensure that a plan is prepared to address procedures that apply in the event of an emergency or the occurrence of a natural disaster or hazardous condition. The campus Emergency Communications Response Plan (Administrative Procedure 7415.2), which implements Board Policy 7415 (Fire, Earthquake and Disaster Safety), ensures the dissemination of information to students, employees, and the community in a consistent and effective manner in the event of an emergency. This plan complies with the National Incident Management System and the Standardized Emergency Management System and should incorporate the functions and principles of

the Incident Command System, the Master Mutual Aid Agreement, and other relevant programs. In addition, Mesa College has developed the Emergency Management Program, which includes the Building Emergency Evacuation Plan and Fire Prevention Plan, in addition to detailed instructions for a variety of emergency situations which could occur on campus (earthquake, fire, disease, chemical spill, etc.) (Mesa College 2026). See Section 3.18.2.3 above for additional information about these emergency response plans and programs. These plans would be updated with evacuation routes for new campus buildings as they are constructed but no impairment of these plans would occur as a result of CMP implementation.

As discussed further in Section 3.13, *Public Services*, emergency response to the campus would involve the SDFD and/or District Police Department, depending on the nature of the emergency. In addition, the Mesa College Emergency Management Program established the In-House Emergency Teams, which are specific employees who serve as leaders for emergency activities within their buildings by managing evacuations, checking assigned areas, and participating in emergency preparedness activities, as necessary.

Throughout the buildout of the CMP, there would be an increase in building area and on-campus student enrollment. As this development and enrollment increase occurs, the District and the leadership within the Mesa College Emergency Management Program would continue to evaluate the emergency response programs and plans that are in place and expand the staff responsible for the execution of the emergency response plans, as necessary. In addition, as discussed further in Section 3.18.4.2 below, the projects implemented under the CMP would incorporate the required fire safety elements and would not exacerbate wildfire risks. Therefore, the CMP would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan once projects are operational.

Project-Level

The near-term projects proposed under the CMP would not cause a direct increase in the campus' population but would result in additional on-campus building area that could affect the existing emergency response framework for the campus. Both of the near-term projects would be constructed in accordance with all applicable state and District requirements for fire-safe construction and would not exacerbate fire risks. Construction of the near-term projects is not anticipated to encroach into City roadways, though on-campus construction could temporarily impair emergency access.

As discussed in the program-level analysis above, the District and leadership within the Mesa College Emergency Management Program would evaluate the emergency response programs and plans that are in place and expand the staff responsible for the execution of the emergency response plans if it is determined to be necessary during District review of the near-term projects. The new buildings would have evacuation plans and be incorporated into the overall evacuation zone framework established for the campus. Therefore, operation of the near-term projects would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan but could interfere with emergency access to campus through construction-period road closures on campus. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation**.

Mitigation Measures

Program-Level

Mitigation measure TRA-1, provided in Section 3.15.4.4, which would require notifications, identification of alternative emergency routes, and implementation of appropriate signage in the event of lane or roadway closures, would apply to future campus projects.

Project-Level

Mitigation measure TRA-1, provided in Section 3.15.4.4, would apply to the near-term projects.

Level of Significance After Mitigation

Implementation of mitigation measure TRA-1 would reduce program-level and project-level impacts related to construction-period emergency access to a level that is **less than significant**.

3.18.4.2 Wildfire Risks

Threshold 2: Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, would the project exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The majority of the Mesa College campus is located within a VHFHSZ (refer to Figure 3.18-1). During construction of individual projects under the CMP, contractors would be required to comply with applicable state regulations to reduce the risk of construction-related fire events. Chapter 33 of the CFC includes requirements that would be implemented during the period of CMP project construction and demolition (if required), such as developing and implementing a written plan for fire prevention, maintaining accessibility for fire apparatus, the provision of fire extinguishers on the construction site, and vegetation management on the project site.

The addition of new buildings to campus also would not exacerbate fire risk, as each project would be constructed in accordance with applicable regulations intended to protect occupants and buildings from fire events. At the state level, this would include compliance with the California Building Standards Code, which requires the use of ignition-resistant materials, the installation of automatic fire sprinkler and alarm systems, defensible space establishment, and the inclusion of fire access roads. Adherence to the CWUIC would be required when projects are constructed within the VHFHSZ. At the District level, new buildings on District properties would be required to comply with the fire-related requirements in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, including the development of a project-specific fire accessibility site plan and fire flow data report with approval by the DSA, compliance with CFC requirements for interior finishes, and compliance with the CBC fire access road requirements. The projects implemented under the CMP would additionally continue compliance with the requirements and procedures outlined in the San Diego Mesa College Fire Prevention Plan, which establishes procedures for identifying fire hazards, handling flammable/combustible material, and preventing fires.

In addition, and as discussed further under Section 3.18.4.4 below, the project site does contain slopes, primarily along the northern, southern, and western portions of the upper mesa of the Mesa College campus, but they are not expected to result in the exacerbation of wildfire risks as the projects implemented under the CMP would be constructed within the developed campus and would be required to stabilize slopes according to geotechnical recommendations provided during project design. These measures would reduce the potential for post-fire erosion or slope instability. In addition, the project site is surrounded by existing development and the CMP would not result in construction of campus buildings in previously undeveloped, natural areas where fire risk is highest. As discussed in Section 3.18.1.1, the average wind speed in the vicinity of the campus is approximately 5.6 mph, though stronger winds can occur during weather events. The projects implemented under the CMP would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slopes or wind above existing conditions, and, rather, would be constructed to current fire safety standards. Implementation of the CMP would not exacerbate wildfire risks such that it would expose project occupants to substantial fire-related effects.

Project-Level

The Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project and Athletics Complex project would each be located within the VHFHSZ designated by the City (refer to Figure 3.18-1). Each of these projects would be constructed in accordance with the fire safety requirements of the CBC, CWUIC, CFC, and the DSA/District, as further discussed at the program-level above. Although the near-term projects would each be constructed on a site that contains hillsides and associated slopes, the near-term projects would implement engineering measures to stabilize slopes which would be detailed in the respective geotechnical evaluations prepared prior to construction. Neither of these near-term projects would exacerbate wildfire risks due to slopes, wind, or other factors.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.18.4.3 Infrastructure Installation

Threshold 3: Would the project require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

The CMP would include roadway improvements to add a bike path and parking along the southern loop of the campus access road, provide a new western campus entrance road, and involve the replacement or upgrade of existing utility infrastructure on an as-needed basis. However, the proposed roadway improvements would occur within the campus to connect developed areas and would be constructed to allow fire truck access. The utility infrastructure replacements proposed under the CMP would involve the replacement of outdated utility infrastructure with similar but more modern technology that incorporates the current requirements for fire safety.

The campus does not have existing overhead power lines and no projects implemented under the CMP would involve the construction of overhead power lines that exacerbate fire risk. Future projects under the CMP would require fire sprinklers and hydrants but are not anticipated to require additional off-site emergency water infrastructure. Vegetation management within the existing campus boundary is conducted as part of the District's ongoing maintenance practices, and continued brush clearance, if needed, to provide defensible space around future buildings implemented under the CMP would occur in accordance with the CWUIC. The temporary and ongoing impacts to the environment that would occur as a result of infrastructure improvements related to fire protection proposed on campus would occur within the project site and are addressed throughout the relevant sections of this PEIR. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk.

Project-Level

The near-term projects would not require the installation of roads or overhead power lines. Vegetation clearing up to 100 feet around proposed structures would occur within the development footprint considered throughout the project-level analysis in this PEIR. In addition, each of the near-term projects would require connections to existing water utilities located within or adjacent to campus, though these connections would not exacerbate fire risk and would occur within the project-level impact areas. Therefore, the near-term projects would not require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment not considered elsewhere in this PEIR.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.18.4.4 Runoff, Post-Fire Slope Instability, or Drainage Risks

Threshold 4: Would the project expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes?

Impact Discussion

Program-Level

Wildfires can greatly reduce the amount of vegetation on hillsides. Slope failures, mudflows, and landslides are common in areas where steep hillsides and embankments are present, and such conditions would be exacerbated in a post-fire environment where vegetative cover has been removed. As discussed in Section 3.6, *Geology and Soils*, much of the project site is mapped as having low susceptibility to landslides; however, slopes and lower-lying areas of the project site are mapped as having higher susceptibility to landslides. As outlined in the District Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, the earthwork requirements for District projects include slope stability strategies, which would be incorporated into projects implemented under the CMP. In addition, slope stability at the individual project sites would be further evaluated in comprehensive geotechnical evaluations, which would

include project-specific recommendations for structural design where a risk of landslides is identified. Therefore, the risk of post-fire instability within and surrounding the project site would be minimal.

As discussed further in Section 3.9, *Hydrology and Water Quality*, the project site is mapped within Zone X (Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] 2012), and the project site is not within a 100-year flood zone. In addition, the projects proposed under the CMP would not require mass grading or substantial changes in topography on the campus, and runoff would continue to drain towards existing and new curbs and gutters throughout the campus. Therefore, implementation of the CMP would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Project-Level

Both of the near-term projects would be located on the eastern portion of the campus and outside of the area identified as an unfavorable geologic setting in which landslides are likely to occur; therefore, the risk of post-fire instability within and surrounding the near-term project sites would be minimal (refer to Section 3.6, *Geology and Soils,* and Figure 3.6-1). In addition, the near-term projects would not be located within a 100-year flood zone and would not result in substantial drainage pattern alterations on their respective project sites. Therefore, the near-term projects would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation

Implementation of the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. **Program-level and project-level impacts would be less than significant**. No mitigation is required.

3.18.5 Cumulative Impact Analysis

The study area for the assessment of cumulative impacts related to emergency evacuation plans is the City, as emergency plans and evacuation routes are established on a citywide scale. The study area for cumulative impacts related to wildfire risks, infrastructure installation, and post-fire risks would be more localized and would include the Clairemont and Linda Vista community planning areas.

3.18.5.1 Emergency Plans

Construction of future cumulative development projects in the City could result in interference with emergency response or evacuation plans during temporary construction activities that block access routes. Once operational, such projects would also be required to provide adequate emergency access in accordance with the CFC and CBC. However, no cumulative projects are reasonably anticipated to result in permanent changes to the nearby highways and arterials such that access to existing emergency evacuation routes would be eliminated. Development within the Mesa College campus would not physically interfere with emergency response or evacuation plans because the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not include features that prevent continued implementation of these plans. In addition, the projects implemented under the CMP would be required to establish and maintain emergency access on campus during construction in accordance with mitigation measure TRA-1 or a City permit. Similarly, cumulative development projects within the City would be required to

comply with relevant state and City policies related to fire safety and circulation under the City's Right-of-Way Permit and associated Traffic Control Plan to ensure that emergency access is maintained during construction. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to emergency response and evacuation plans would be **less than significant**.

3.18.5.2 Wildfire Risks

Similar to the proposed CMP, cumulative development projects within the Clairemont and Linda Vista community planning areas could be located within or adjacent to VHFHSZs. Cumulative development projects within the City would be required to adhere to all regulatory requirements in place to minimize wildfire hazards due to construction in these areas, including compliance with the SDFD fire safety during construction and demolition standards (SDFD 2025) in addition to relevant sections of the CFC, CWUIC, and CBC. As described in Section 3.18.4.2 above, the project would not exacerbate wildfire risk based on site-specific factors or the proposed development types. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to wildfire risks would be **less than significant**.

3.18.5.3 Infrastructure Installation

Cumulative development projects could require the installation or maintenance of infrastructure that could exacerbate fire risk. Environmental impacts associated with infrastructure improvements, including any required features to address fire safety such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, or utilities would be evaluated in the respective environmental documents for discretionary projects. As discussed in Section 3.18.4.3, the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in environmental impacts related to the installation of infrastructure beyond those described throughout this PEIR. As such, cumulative impacts related to fire-related infrastructure installation would be **less than significant**.

3.18.5.4 Runoff, Post-Fire Slope Instability, or Drainage Risks

Cumulative development projects proposed within the Clairemont and Linda Vista community planning areas could be located on sites that are subject to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides. Similar to the project, the cumulative development projects would be subject to CBC and local geotechnical requirements that are developed for the purpose of ensuring that habitable structures are not sited in unsafe areas, such as those subject to landslides or flooding. Potential impacts related to downslope or downstream flooding or landslides would be evaluated in the respective technical reports and environmental documents for discretionary projects and design measures to reduce post-fire risk would be incorporated into project designs. As discussed in Section 3.18.4.4, the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes. Therefore, cumulative impacts related to post-fire risks would be **less than significant**.

4.0 EFFECTS FOUND NOT TO BE SIGNIFICANT

CEQA Guidelines Section 15128 requires that an EIR contain a brief statement disclosing the reasons why possible environmental effects of a project were found not to be significant and, therefore, were not discussed in detail in the EIR. Project impacts associated with Agriculture and Forestry Resources and Mineral Resources were determined not to be significant. A brief explanation indicating the reasons that the effects on these resources would not be significant is provided under each subheading below.

4.1 Agriculture and Forestry Resources

The project site is developed with non-agricultural uses and is designated as Urban and Built-up Land by the California Department of Conservation's (DOC's) Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (DOC 2022). The project site does not contain areas designated as Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance. As the District is exempt from local zoning and land use plan/element requirements, land owned by the District is not subject to Williamson Act contracts and is not zoned by the City of San Diego (City) for agricultural use. As such, the project would not result in the conversion of designated farmland, Williamson Act contract lands, or land otherwise used for agricultural purposes to non-agricultural uses, and there would be no impact to agricultural resources.

The existing project site does not contain forestlands, timberlands, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. Moreover, there is no land zoned as forest land or timberland that exists within the project site or its vicinity. The area surrounding the project site includes residential, open space, educational, recreational, and commercial uses. The open space near campus does not constitute forestland and is not used for timber production. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for or cause a rezoning of forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production. No impacts to forestry resources would occur.

4.2 Mineral Resources

The Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 required the classification of land into mineral resource zones (MRZs), according to known or inferred mineral resource potential. As such, the DOC classifies the availability of mineral resources in a region into one of four MRZ categories: MRZ-1 for no mineral resources, MRZ-2 for significant resource areas with known quality and quantity, MRZ-3 for significant resource areas of unknown quality and quantity, and MRZ-4 for areas with no information. According to the California Geological Survey's (CGS's) Mineral Land Classification Map, the project site and its vicinity are classified as MRZ-3, indicating that the presence or significance of mineral resources cannot be determined (CGS 2017). While there is potential for mineral deposits to occur in the project vicinity, the project site is not used for mineral extraction, is not known or designated as a locally important mineral resource recovery site, and is not designated for mineral extraction uses. The project site is developed with campus uses and is surrounded to the north and east by existing residential development that would be incompatible with mineral extraction within the project site. Therefore, the implementation of the CMP would not result in the loss of availability of a regionally or locally important mineral resource. No impacts to mineral resources would occur.

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5.0 OTHER CEQA CONSIDERATIONS

This section includes CEQA considerations not contained elsewhere in this PEIR that are required to be included per CEQA Guidelines Section 15126. Specifically, discussions of significant irreversible environmental effects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126[c]) and growth-inducing impacts (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126[d]) are provided in this section. A summary of significant and unavoidable environmental effects, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(b), is provided in this section based on the impact determinations provided in Section 3.0, *Environmental Analysis*, which provides further discussion of these impacts and also provides discussion meeting the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15126 (a) and (e). Alternatives to the proposed project are discussed in Section 6.0, *Project Alternatives*, to meet the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(f).

5.1 Significant and Unavoidable Environmental Impacts

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(c) requires an EIR to describe any significant impacts that cannot be avoided, including those impacts that can be mitigated but not reduced to a less than significant level. Section 4.0, *Effects Not Found to Be Significant*, of this PEIR analyzes and discusses the CEQA environmental topics where the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not have a significant impact. Section 3.0, *Environmental Analysis*, of this PEIR identifies the potential environmental impacts of the project and recommends mitigation measures to reduce impacts, where feasible.

As discussed further in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, implementation of the near-term projects would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources, and no impact would occur. However, implementation of the CMP has the potential to cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources directly through alterations to character defining features or indirectly via construction adjacent to a historical resource. To mitigate future potential adverse impacts to historical resources located on the Mesa College campus, mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4 would apply to proposed alterations, additions, demolitions, and/or construction involving any of these resources: Fine Arts building (Building FA), Nursery and Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2), and buildings contributing to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6). Mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4 would reduce potential impacts on historic resources to the extent feasible; however, impacts would remain significant after mitigation for future projects that do not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as determined under mitigation measure CUL-1. See Section 3.4.4.1 for additional details.

5.2 Significant and Irreversible Environmental Effects

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) requires a discussion of significant irreversible environmental changes that would be caused by a proposed project. Per CEQA Guidelines Section 15127, irreversible changes are only required to be addressed in EIRs when connected with the adoption, amendment, or enactment of a local plan, policy, or ordinance of a public agency; adoption by a local agency formation commission of a resolution making determinations; or when a project is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act and requires an Environmental Impact Statement. The project would involve the adoption of the CMP by the District as the local agency, and, thus, consideration of irreversible environmental changes is required.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) further notes that significant and irreversible environmental changes may occur as a result of the use of nonrenewable resources during the initial and continued phases of a project since a large commitment of such resources makes removal or nonuse thereafter unlikely. Irreversible environmental changes typically fall into one of the following three categories: primary impacts, meaning the use of nonrenewable resources for a project; secondary impacts, such as highway or roadway improvements that provide access to a previously inaccessible area, thereby committing future generations to similar uses of resources; and environmental accidents resulting in environmental changes. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(d) states that irretrievable commitments of resources should be evaluated to ensure that such consumption is justified.

5.2.1 Irreversible Commitment of Resources

The projects proposed under the CMP would involve a series of site improvement and facility projects on the Mesa College campus to accommodate projected enrollment through 2045. Construction of the projects proposed under the CMP would require the use of renewable resources such as lumber and other forest products, which could be expected to be replenished over the lifetime of each of the projects because sustainably harvested lumber supplies are increased as seedlings mature into trees. As such, the development of projects proposed under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in the irreversible commitment of renewable resources. Nevertheless, there would be an incremental increase in the demand for these resources during construction of the near-term projects and buildout of the CMP.

Construction of projects under the CMP would also result in the use of nonrenewable resources, including building materials (e.g., concrete asphalt, petrochemical construction materials, steel, copper and other metals, and sand and gravel) and fossil fuels, including the use of fossil fuels for construction equipment, the transport of construction materials to the project site and the transportation of construction workers to and from the project site (e.g., natural gas, gasoline, diesel fuel, and other petroleum-based products). These materials and the resources used in their production are available in a finite supply and are generally not retrievable, although some of the materials are recyclable. Construction materials like concrete and asphalt, for example, can be crushed and recycled as road base. Projects constructed under the CMP would comply with the District's Design Guidelines and Standards Manual, which includes incentives and requirements related to the recycling of construction materials where possible. However, the recycling of these resources for project construction cannot be assured, and the project should be considered to result in an incremental increase in the demand for nonrenewable construction materials and fuels.

During operation, the projects implemented under the CMP would result in an irretrievable commitment of nonrenewable resources, such as energy resources and fossil fuels. Long-term energy resources include fuel consumed for the heating and cooling of buildings, transportation of people and goods, as well as for lighting and other energy-related needs. Electricity consumption during operation would increase the consumption of oil, coal, and natural gas to the extent the utility provider (San Diego Gas & Electric [SDG&E]) relies on such resources to generate electricity. Accordingly, this represents a long-term commitment to the continued consumption of these resources. As mandated by Senate Bill (SB) 1020, 100 percent of retail sales of electricity to California end-use customers are required to come from eligible renewable energy resources and zero-carbon resources by December 31, 2045. This statewide requirement would apply to SDG&E, which would in turn provide the District with electricity to ensure that the electricity utilized by the District at full buildout of the CMP would come from renewable energy and zero-carbon resources. As discussed in Section 3.5, *Energy*, of this PEIR, the CMP,

including the near-term projects, would not result in significant impacts related to wasteful use of energy, including fuel consumption, and electricity or natural gas use.

5.2.2 Irreversible Environmental Changes

Implementation of the proposed CMP, including the near-term projects, would result in irreversible environmental changes. Irreversible environmental changes are typically associated with the environmental topics of agricultural and forestry resources, biological resources, cultural resources, paleontological resources, mineral resources, and tribal cultural resources, as removal of these resource types is generally not reversible once development has occurred.

The project site is currently developed, and no agricultural, forestry, or mineral resources occur on the site. As such, implementation of projects under the CMP would not result in irreversible changes to agricultural and forestry resources or mineral resources. Further discussions of project impacts related to these resources are provided in Section 4.0, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*.

As identified in Section 3.3, *Biological Resources*, implementation of the CMP has the potential to result in direct and indirect impacts to special-status species (e.g., Nuttall's scrub oak, Torrey pine, San Diego barrel cactus, Shaw's agave, ashy spike moss, and San Diego sunflower, California gnatcatcher, Cooper's hawk, osprey, and nesting birds). However, projects implemented under the CMP would be required to implement mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-16, which would reduce program-level impacts to special-status species to a level that is less than significant. In addition, although implementation of the CMP has the potential to result in impacts to sensitive vegetation communities or wetland communities and the program-level impacts would be significant prior to mitigation, implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 and BIO-17 through BIO-20 would reduce program-level impacts to sensitive vegetation or wetland communities to a level that is less than significant by providing compensatory mitigation that results in no net loss of sensitive habitat or wetlands. Therefore, no irreversible net loss of habitat or special-status species would occur.

As discussed in Section 5.1 above and in Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*, mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4 would reduce potential impacts on historic resources to the extent feasible at the program-level; however, program-level impacts would remain significant and unavoidable after mitigation for future projects that do not comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties as determined under mitigation measure CUL-1. Neither of the near-term projects would result in changes to historical resources, and no impact would occur at the project level. Nonetheless, if historical resources are demolished or altered as part of CMP implementation such that the eligibility of the resource is impaired, such changes would be irreversible.

In addition, implementation of the CMP has the potential to disturb archaeological resources and human remains at the program level due to ground disturbing activities for projects within moderate sensitivity areas. However, implementation of mitigation measure CUL-5 would reduce program-level impacts to archeological resources to a level that is less than significant. The near-term projects would not result in changes to archaeological resources and project-level impacts would be less than significant. Potential impacts to human remains at the program-level and project-level would be reduced to less than significant with implementation of mitigation measure CUL-6. Similarly, and as discussed further in Section 3.16, *Tribal Cultural Resources*, potential impacts to tribal cultural resources would be reduced to a less than significant level at the program level with implementation of mitigation

measures CUL-5 and CUL-6. Therefore, no irreversible loss of archaeological or tribal cultural resources would occur.

As discussed further in Section 3.6, *Geology and Soils*, the project site is primarily underlain by geologic units assigned a moderate paleontological resource sensitivity (Lindavista Formation) and high paleontological resource sensitivity (the Stadium Conglomerate, Friars Formation, and Scripps Formation), and excavation activities proposed under the CMP within previously undisturbed deposits of these geologic units would have the potential to result in disturbance of paleontological resources. However, projects implemented under the CMP, including the near-term projects, would implement mitigation measures GEO-1 through GEO-4, as applicable, which would reduce program-level and project-level impacts to paleontological resources to a level that is less than significant. Therefore, no irreversible loss of paleontological resources would occur.

Future campus projects would involve circulation improvements across campus, including pedestrian connections, bicycle paths, ride share drop off areas, and bus stops, and roadway improvements to add a bike path and parking along the southern loop of the campus access road are anticipated. However, the project would not involve road or highway improvements that would provide access to previously inaccessible areas where resources would begin to be used. As such, the CMP, including the near-term projects, would not result in significant irreversible secondary impacts.

5.2.3 Potential Environmental Damage from Accidents

Construction of the projects proposed under the CMP would involve the on-site use and/or storage of hazardous materials/wastes such as fuels, lubricants, solvents, concrete, paint, and portable septic system wastes. While these substances could pose a potential health risk to construction workers and to the public during transport, handling of these materials would occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, and District regulations. In addition, the location of material storage and construction staging areas for each project would be dictated by a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) or Water Pollution Control Plan (WPCP), which would include additional storage and containment measures requiring the regular maintenance of construction equipment and providing storage criteria for oil, gasoline, and other potential contaminants that are commonly used during construction activities. Therefore, construction activities associated with future development projects would not result in a significant risk of environmental damage from accidents involving hazardous materials.

As described in Section 3.8, *Hazards and Hazardous Materials*, implementation of the CMP would involve the demolition of various buildings, many of which were constructed when fewer regulations on building materials were in effect. Federal regulations banned the use of lead-based paints (LBPs) for residential structures in 1978, and regulations banning asbestos have continued to evolve as recently as 2024, though the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) rule first issued in 1989 (then later remanded) began the phase-out of asbestos-containing materials (ACMs) in many industries. Due to the age of the structures proposed for demolition, there is potential for the presence of LBPs or ACMs in these structures and proposed demolition activities could result in the release of LBP and ACMs, if they are present. As detailed in the District Standards and Guidelines Manual, a hazardous materials survey is required to identify materials that require specialized handling prior to demolition of campus building. If hazardous materials are identified, the District employs a contractor licensed for abatement and removal of the identified hazards to manage construction involving these materials as required by USEPA and California Division of Occupational Safety and Health regulations. Demolition and associated waste disposal would also occur in accordance with the applicable regulations for managing hazardous

building materials, which would protect construction workers, the general public, and the environment from adverse effects resulting from the accidental release of LBPs or ACMs.

The expansion of campus facilities could also lead to a long-term increase in the amount of hazardous materials used on campus. However, the types of hazardous materials used at Mesa College are not expected to change as a result of future projects implemented under the CMP as the future projects would involve existing campus land use types. The quantities of common hazardous materials that are used for cleaning, maintenance, and landscaping activities would increase as additional building and landscape areas are added to campus. Campus operations that require less common types of hazardous materials include laboratory and clinic uses, vehicle maintenance, and pool maintenance on campus. No specific changes to laboratory programming are proposed under the CMP, though future increase in on-campus enrollment could slightly increase the use of hazardous materials in campus laboratories. The relocation of hazardous materials use and storage and the slight increase in the quantities of these materials that are used would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment as management of these materials would continue to occur in accordance with applicable federal, state, County of San Diego (County), and District regulations as outlined in the Mesa College Chemical Hygiene Program and Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP). The Mesa College Chemical Hygiene Program and HMBP would be updated where relevant to reflect these changes in the locations of hazardous materials and associated disposal or shutoff locations. Adherence to all applicable regulations would ensure that the hazardous materials used for campus operations are properly managed such that no substantial hazards to the public or the environment occur. Therefore, the potential for the proposed CMP, including the near-term projects, to cause significant irreversible environmental damage from an accident or upset of hazardous material would be less than significant.

5.3 Growth Inducement

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126(d) requires that an EIR discuss a project's potential impacts related to growth inducement. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(e) further states that an EIR should describe the ways in which a proposed project could directly or indirectly foster economic growth, population growth, or additional housing, and how that growth would affect the surrounding environment.

A project can have direct and/or indirect growth inducement potential. Direct growth inducement can result from the construction of new housing that would result in new residents moving to an area. Indirect growth can be induced in a number of ways, including the stimulation of economic activity within a region that would result in the need for additional housing and services to support the new employment demand, or through the elimination of obstacles to growth, including both physical and regulatory obstacles.

Growth inducement has the potential to result in an adverse impact if the growth is not consistent with or accommodated by the land use plans and growth management plans and policies for the area affected. Since the general plan of a community defines the location, type, and intensity of growth, it is the primary means of regulating development and growth in that community. The District and Mesa College campus are not subject to the City of San Diego's (City's) General Plan, and the applicable growth management plan for the campus would be the District enrollment plans. Physical space necessitated by such enrollment growth is described in the CMP.

5.3.1 Direct Population Growth

Refer to Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*, of this PEIR for a full discussion of population and housing impacts associated with buildout of the CMP and the near-term projects. Under the CMP, the Mesa College on-campus student population and employee population would increase. However, it is anticipated that this on-campus enrollment and job growth would occur as a result of an increase in students and employees from the project region, as community colleges are generally designed to target and serve local communities. Increases in enrollment would be expected to come from the existing and projected regional population and would not draw new people to the region. This regional growth is projected in the San Diego Association of Government's (SANDAG's) population projections for the County, which anticipate the regional population to increase by approximately 112,944 individuals from 2022 through 2050 and reach 3.4 million people, which represents an increase of 3.4 percent over this period.

As discussed above, the on-campus population is projected to grow by 4,662 individuals (3,955 students and 707 employees) from 2025 through 2045, which represents a growth rate of 1.5 percent per year. While the increase in on-campus population growth considered in this PEIR would outpace regional population growth, this 1.5 percent annual on-campus growth rate reflects the potential for attracting and accommodating more students in on-campus courses through implementation of planned improvements to campus facilities, academic offerings, and student services, while also providing a conservative approach for environmental analysis.

The potential for additional housing to be provided on campus as a future project is also not anticipated to result in unplanned population growth in the region, as such housing would be provided for District students or employees who, as discussed above, are existing residents of the region. In addition, as described further in Section 3.12.1.2, the demand for housing in the region over the coming years is anticipated to outpace the supply, especially for affordable housing options. The addition of housing units to campus would accommodate existing populations and would not induce unplanned population growth. Mesa College would continue to serve the regional population as it grows and would not induce substantial regional population growth.

The physical environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of the proposed CMP, including the near-term projects, are analyzed in Sections 3.1 through 3.18 of this PEIR. This analysis has demonstrated that there are adequate services available to serve the full buildout of the CMP and the anticipated on-campus enrollment growth that is anticipated to occur by 2045.

5.3.2 Economic Growth

The CMP would implement on-campus improvements to accommodate projected enrollment increases and associated increases in faculty and staff on campus. Construction of the projects proposed under the CMP would involve additional construction employment opportunities. Given the relatively common nature and scale of proposed future projects, the demand for construction employment is anticipated to be met within the existing and future labor market in the region. The size of the construction workforce would vary during the different stages of construction but would not be of a size such that a substantial number of laborers from outside of the County would relocate for these employment opportunities. The District also specifically prioritizes hiring construction contractors from the local workforce pursuant to its Community Benefits Agreement with the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council and many craft unions, as further discussed in Section 3.12, *Population and Housing*.

Under the CMP, the Mesa College on-campus student population and employee population would increase. However, it is anticipated that this enrollment and job growth would occur as a result of an increase in students and employees from the project region, as community colleges are generally designed to target and serve local communities. Therefore, increases in enrollment are expected to come from the existing and projected regional population and would not draw new people to the region. No significant physical effects are anticipated to result from economic growth generated by projects implemented under the CMP.

5.3.3 Removing Obstacles to Growth

The removal of either physical or regulatory obstacles to growth is considered to be a growth-inducing impact. A physical obstacle to growth typically involves the lack of public service and/or utility infrastructure. A project could trigger growth if it would result in infrastructure with excess capacity or if it would remove an obstacle to growth in an area, such as providing infrastructure to an area that was previously not available. A regulatory obstacle to growth typically involves a change in zoning or land use regulations that allow for an increase in growth.

The CMP proposes campus improvements that would be located within the boundaries of the Mesa College campus, which is a developed area served by existing public utilities and services. The campus is also surrounded by urban development served by these utilities and services under existing conditions. The projects implemented under the CMP would not include the extension or expansion of public services beyond connections or upgrades to the existing infrastructure in the immediate vicinity that are required to serve the projects implemented under the CMP. Water and sewer service to the Mesa College campus is currently provided by the City and would continue to serve the campus as buildout of the CMP occurs. Solid waste disposal service for the Mesa College campus would continue to be provided by the City and taken to a landfill with sufficient capacity. The project also would not result in the need for new or physically altered facilities related to fire services, police services, schools, or libraries. Refer to Sections 3.13, *Public Services*, and 3.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*, for further details. As development of campus projects under the CMP would not extend public service or utility infrastructure to undeveloped areas, it would not result in the removal of an obstacle to growth that would lead to future growth.

Relative to regulatory obstacles, implementation of the CMP would not change the allowable development types or intensities outside of the boundaries of the Mesa College campus and would therefore not remove a regulatory obstacle to growth.

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6.0 PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

6.1 Introduction

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(a) requires that an EIR describe and evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives to a proposed project, or alternatives to the location of a proposed project. The purpose of the alternatives analysis is to explore ways that most of the basic objectives of a proposed project could be attained while reducing or avoiding significant environmental impacts of the project as proposed. Not every conceivable alternative must be addressed, nor do infeasible alternatives need to be considered. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f) specifies that "the range of alternatives in an EIR is governed by the 'rule of reason' that requires the EIR to set forth only those alternatives necessary to permit a reasoned choice." The Lead Agency is responsible for selecting a range of alternatives for examination and must publicly disclose its reasoning for selecting those alternatives. This approach is intended to foster informed decision making and public participation in the environmental process.

The CEQA Guidelines state that the discussion of alternatives should focus on alternatives "which are capable of avoiding or substantially lessening any significant effects of the project, even if these alternatives would impede to some degree the attainment of the project objectives, or would be more costly" (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[b]). An EIR is not required to consider alternatives that are infeasible, have effects that cannot be reasonably ascertained, or are remote and speculative. The determination of feasibility may be based on factors such as site suitability, economic viability, availability of infrastructure, other plans or regulatory limitations, and jurisdictional boundaries (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[f][1]). Additionally, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires the analysis of a "no project" alternative that describes what would reasonably be expected to occur on the project site in the foreseeable future if the proposed project were not approved. Based on the alternatives analysis, an environmentally superior alternative is to be identified.

In developing the project alternatives to be addressed in this PEIR, potential alternatives were evaluated in terms of their ability to meet the basic objectives of the project, while reducing or avoiding the environmental impacts of the project. An EIR need not evaluate the environmental effects of alternatives in the same level of detail as the project, but must include enough information to allow meaningful evaluation, analysis, and comparison with the project (CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6[d]). Accordingly, this section covers a reasonable range of feasible alternatives that focus on avoiding or substantially lessening significant effects of the project, even if the alternatives would not attain all of the project objectives or would be more costly.

As the near-term projects are portions of the overall CMP, there are no impacts of the near-term projects that are unique to those projects and not also identified at the program level of analysis. As such, this alternatives analysis is provided at a programmatic level of analysis, considering the CMP as a whole rather than alternatives to individual near-term projects analyzed at the project level.

6.2 Project Objectives

An EIR must only discuss in detail alternatives that are capable of feasibly attaining most of the basic objectives associated with the project, while at the same time avoiding or substantially lessening the

significant environmental effects associated with the project. As stated in Section 2.3, *Project Objectives*, of this PEIR, the following are the primary objectives of the project:

1. Provide the facilities and infrastructure needed to accommodate projected enrollment through 2045 and support the campus' goals of quality, equity, and excellence of all programs and services.

2. Maximize efficient use of campus space and increase the capacity of campus buildings to meet anticipated program needs.

3. Increase the amount of parking available on campus to maintain a 1:5 ratio of parking spaces to student enrollment.

4. Ensure student support services and program spaces are logically placed to facilitate connection between related programs and services.

5. Strengthen the campus community beyond the campus core by placing services where students are, distributing parking throughout campus, and increasing visibility of community facilities.

6. Provide clearly defined pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation patterns with enhanced arrival experiences via gateways that lead to easily accessible facilities and parking areas.

7. Enhance campus connectivity for pedestrians, considering both vertical and horizontal movement across campus.

8. Minimize the loss of instructional space and interruptions to campus activities during construction.

9. Incorporate sustainability features in future campus development and programming to align with state climate targets and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office directives related to greenhouse gas emissions reduction, energy efficiency, resource conservation, and green building standards.

6.3 Significant Environmental Effects of the Project

Alternatives considered under CEQA should avoid or substantially lessen one or more significant environmental impacts that would occur with implementation of the project as proposed. As such, this alternatives analysis focuses on the issues discussed in PEIR Sections 3.1 through 3.18 where the project was found to have the potential to result in significant impacts on the environment related to these topics. Environmental issues where there was determined to be no impact or a less than significant impact at the program-level, including those discussed in Section 4.0, *Effects Found Not to be Significant*, are not carried forward into this alternatives analysis because it was determined that there is no potential for the project to result in significant impacts to these resources. Accordingly, the alternatives would not avoid or substantially lessen environmental impacts associated with these resources and no further analysis is warranted.

The alternatives analysis focuses on the issue areas where the analysis provided in PEIR Sections 3.1 through 3.18 concludes that there would be a significant and unavoidable impact or less than significant

impact with mitigation. In summary, the project would result in significant but mitigated impacts for the following environmental issue areas:

- Aesthetics (Light and Glare)
- Biological Resources (Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, Wetlands)
- Cultural Resources (Archaeological Resources, Human Remains)
- Geology and Soils (Paleontological Resources)
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans)
- Noise (Increase in Ambient Noise Levels, Ground-Borne Vibration)
- Transportation (Emergency Access)
- Tribal Cultural Resources (Tribal Cultural Resources)
- Wildfire (Emergency Plans)

Mitigation measures identified in this PEIR would reduce the impacts listed above below a level of significance. However, one significant impact would remain despite implementation of mitigation to the extent feasible:

- Cultural Resources (Historic Resources)

Impacts related to all other environmental issue areas were determined to be less than significant or not impacted with implementation of the project.

6.4 Alternatives Considered but Rejected

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c) requires that an EIR identify alternatives that were considered but rejected from further analysis and briefly explain the reasons for their rejection. As part of the CMP development process and the alternatives identification process for this PEIR, several alternatives were considered that would expand or redevelop campus facilities in a different way than proposed in the CMP and detailed as part of the project described in Section 2.0, *Project Description*, of the PEIR. Some of these alternatives were determined to be infeasible or not to meet the purpose of the alternatives analysis. The following describes some of the preliminary concepts considered as alternatives to the project and the reason(s) underlying their rejection from further analysis.

Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(c), factors that may be used to eliminate alternatives from detailed consideration may include failure to meet most of the basic project objectives, infeasibility, or inability to avoid significant environmental impacts. Feasible is defined in Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21061.1 as “capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, social, and technological factors.”

6.4.1 No Project Alternative – No New Development

CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires that a "no project" alternative be evaluated along with its impacts to allow decision makers to compare the impacts of approving the project with the impacts of not approving the project. The "no project" analysis considers what would be reasonably expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services. A no new development alternative would allow general maintenance and repairs to continue on campus but would not involve the construction of new facilities or major renovations of existing facilities that require discretionary approval or environmental review.

A no project alternative wherein no new development or improvements to campus facilities occur is not reasonably foreseeable based on regulatory limitations related to Measure HH. Voter approval of Measure HH in the November 5, 2024 election authorized the District to issue $3.5 billion in general obligation bonds to fund new construction, facility modernization, sustainability improvements, safety upgrades, and campus infrastructure enhancements across its campuses. The first sale of $850 million in bonds was completed in January 2025. Proceeds from the sale of bonds authorized under Measure HH are required to be used for the general purposes set forth in the ballot measure or bond sale unless otherwise authorized by the District Board of Trustees based on specific findings. While an alternative with no new development may avoid environmental effects associated with implementation of the CMP, it would continue campus operations within aging facilities and would not fulfill project objectives related to improvements in on-campus offerings, in addition to not being reasonably foreseeable based on the bond funding obligations of Measure HH. Therefore, this alternative was rejected from further analysis.

6.4.2 Alternative Campus Location

Under this alternative, a new campus would be constructed in another location within the District and the alternative campus would accommodate the new buildings and improvements envisioned in the CMP for the campus. As specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(f)(2), the key question in considering an alternative location is whether the significant effects of the project would be avoided or substantially lessened by placing the project in another location. While no specific location within the District has been identified as available to accommodate a new campus, it is likely that the construction and operation of an alternative campus location would result in new potential environmental impacts depending on the selected location. These effects could potentially include increased construction emissions, the need for new utilities and public services resulting in impacts to natural resources, increased vehicle miles traveled (VMT) due to commutes between campuses, and inconsistency with local planning documents, among others that are not expected under the project.

The construction of an alternative campus would also require the inefficient duplication of facilities and services. While there is potential for some individual projects proposed under the CMP to occur in other locations throughout the District's service area, many of the projects would improve or expand existing campus programming and therefore depend on collaboration with existing campus programs. When the District has acquired or utilized properties that are not contiguous to its existing campuses (e.g., College of Continuing Education spaces and administrative offices), it has done so for functions that can operate independently from campus services such as student support, student life, dining, and collaborative department spaces. Rather, construction of an alternative campus would conflict with Project Objective 4 wherein future development would improve the co-location of related campus programs, facilities,

and activities. Because the District already has three main campuses and multiple locations providing courses through the College of Continuing Education within its service area, the construction of a new campus would be a duplication of educational facilities resulting in the inefficient use of funds and an increase in environmental effects. Accordingly, this alternative was rejected from further analysis.

6.4.3 Off-Site Housing Alternative

California's affordable housing crisis has affected the ability of District students to pursue their educational aspirations given the expense of paying for housing and basic living necessities. A District study conducted in 2025 found that 59 percent of District students faced housing insecurity, and 23 percent reported being homeless (District 2025). By offering affordable student housing, the District can provide students with a stable living environment, enabling them to focus on their education and achieve their goals. Similarly, the lack of available and affordable housing for District employees has priced some employees out of the housing market near their work locations, resulting in the District losing valuable personnel. By providing housing options, the District intends to improve its support for the basic needs of students and employees so they may continue to study in or work for the District.

While additional on-campus housing is an alternative discussed in Section 6.4.4 below, another option the District has considered to increase the District-provided housing stock is through the provision of off-campus housing near campus. This alternative could involve the acquisition of existing multi-family housing or the acquisition of property and new construction of student or employee housing. Depending on the type of construction or renovations required as well as the location of such a project, impacts from the construction of new housing could be increased, decreased, or similar to those that would occur with an on-campus housing project. Reuse of existing multi-family housing near campus would likely have negligible environmental effects while constructing new housing could have similar effects to constructing a new housing building on campus depending on the location. Housing students or employees in off-campus housing could also increase their commute trips compared to if such housing was provided within the campus. There are no specific off-campus properties currently owned or controlled by the District that are planned for development with off-campus District housing. As such, the evaluation of impacts for an off-site housing alternative would be speculative. If such a project is proposed by the District in the future and proposed renovation or redevelopment actions are subject to CEQA, a separate environmental analysis would be required. This alternative is therefore rejected from further analysis.

6.4.4 Increased Campus Housing Alternative

As the CMP identified two options for on-campus housing projects, the impacts associated with construction in both of the potential housing project locations were considered throughout the analysis in this PEIR. However, the overall building area and bed count for the campus assume construction of only one housing building. An alternative was considered to further increase the availability of District housing through the development of housing at both locations. In comparison with the adopted CMP, an increased campus housing alternative would result in a greater net increase in building space on campus but would not change the impacts of construction in a particular location. Therefore, this alternative would not avoid or reduce the significant environmental impacts of the project and this alternative is rejected from further analysis.

6.5 Analysis of Project Alternatives

This section presents an evaluation of the three alternatives to the project carried forward for detailed analysis based on their ability to reduce project impacts (refer to Section 6.3) and meet most of the project objectives (refer to Section 6.2). For each of the alternatives, a brief description of the alternative is first presented, followed by a comparative impact analysis relative to the significant and unavoidable or significant but mitigated impacts of the project presented in Chapter 3.0, *Environmental Analysis*, of this PEIR, and an assessment of the degree to which the alternative would meet the objectives of the project.

The No Project Alternative (Near-Term Projects Only) was selected for analysis pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) as an alternative that represents reasonably foreseeable conditions if the project is not approved. The Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative focuses on the avoidance of historic resources on campus as a means to avoid the significant and unavoidable impact of the project. Lastly, the Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative is considered as a means to avoid the significant but mitigated impacts to natural resources within the undeveloped portions of campus.

Table 6-1, *Comparison of Project and Alternatives Impacts*, provides a comparative summary of the project and alternatives with the purpose of highlighting whether each alternative would result in a similar, greater, or lesser impact than the project.

Table 6-1
COMPARISON OF PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVES IMPACTS

Issue Areas with Potential for Significant Impacts under the Project	Comprehensive Master Plan (Project)	Alternatives		
		No Project Alternative (Near-Term Projects Only)	Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative	Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative
Aesthetics				
Light and Glare	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Biological Resources				
Special-Status Species	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM<
Sensitive Habitats	LTSM	LTS<	LTSM=	LTS<
Wetlands	LTSM	LTS<	LTSM=	LTS<
Cultural Resources				
Historic Resources	SU	NI<	LTS<	SU<
Archaeological Resources	LTSM	LTS<	LTSM=	LTS<
Human Remains	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Geology and Soils				
Paleontological Resources	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM<
Hazards and Hazardous Materials				
Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Noise				
Increase in Ambient Noise Levels	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Ground-Borne Vibration	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=
Transportation				
Emergency Access	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=

Issue Areas with Potential for Significant Impacts under the Project	Comprehensive Master Plan (Project)	Alternatives		
		No Project Alternative (Near-Term Projects Only)	Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative	Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative
Tribal Cultural Resources				
Tribal Cultural Resources	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM<
Wildfire				
Emergency Plans	LTSM	LTSM<	LTSM=	LTSM=

SU = significant and unavoidable impact; LTSM = less than significant impact with mitigation; LTS = less than significant impact; NI = no impact
< represents reduced impact relative to the project
= represents same/similar impacts relative to the project

6.5.1 No Project Alternative – Near-Term Projects Only

As further described in Section 6.4.1, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e) requires evaluation of a "no project" alternative to consider what would be reasonably expected to occur if the project were not approved. A no project alternative that results in no new campus development is not reasonably foreseeable, in part due to funding obligations for the bonds that have already been sold or are authorized to be sold under Measure HH.

Further, as bond sales authorized by Measure HH have occurred, the District is obligated to use those funds for projects or purposes listed in the Measure HH ballot measure and/or subsequent bond sale. Without additional funding beyond the bond sales authorized by Measure HH, the long-term projects identified in the approved CMP would not be constructed. Therefore, under this alternative, only the near-term projects would be implemented: the Athletics Complex project and the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Garage project. These projects total approximately 315,000 gross square feet (GSF) of new construction and 28,577 GSF of demolition, resulting in a net increase of 286,423 GSF of campus building space compared to the net increase of 546,870 GSF anticipated with the project. Under this alternative, only the new parking structure that is part of the near-term project would be constructed.

With this alternative, campus operations would continue as they do under baseline conditions. No new buildings or other improvements planned in the CMP and requiring discretionary approval by the District other than the near-term projects would be constructed. However, minor and ongoing maintenance of existing facilities and infrastructure that do not require District discretion or environmental review could continue. Such projects could involve replacement of broken equipment or features, repainting, or movement of campus functions between existing spaces.

As student growth is anticipated to continue as a result of increases in the regional population and demand for community college courses rather than in connection with upgraded facilities or new programming, the growth in student enrollment considered as part of the project in this PEIR could continue; however, some of this growth may instead be accommodated through online enrollment. Under this alternative, the ability for students to enroll in on-campus courses could be limited by the use of existing facilities, which would remain generally in their existing conditions, and the near-term project facilities.

6.5.1.1 Impact Analysis

Aesthetics (Light and Glare)

The No Project Alternative would result in similar lighting sources as the project but is anticipated to be less intensive as the amount of new construction would be reduced. As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.1.4.4, implementation of the near-term projects proposed under the No Project Alternative could create new sources of substantial light or glare, including new stadium lighting associated with the Athletics Complex project, and impacts would be potentially significant. Mitigation measures AES-1 and AES-2 would continue to apply to both of the near-term projects under this alternative, which would reduce impacts related to the creation of light or glare to a level that is less than significant. In comparison with the project, new sources of lighting would be reduced but existing campus lighting would remain in place. Overall, light and glare impacts associated with this alternative would be reduced compared to the project.

Biological Resources (Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, Wetlands)

As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.3.4.1, implementation of the near-term projects proposed under the No Project Alternative could result in impacts to special-status species (osprey) and nesting birds during tree or vegetation removal. Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-5 and BIO-6 would reduce these impacts to a level that is less than significant under this alternative. As this alternative would not involve development in previously undeveloped areas or adjacent to the Multi-Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) (refer to Figure 3.3-1), the mitigation measures identified for related program-level impacts (BIO-1 through BIO-4 and BIO-7 through BIO-16) would not be required. Therefore, significant but mitigated impacts related to special-status species would still occur under this alternative but would be substantially reduced compared to the project due to the reduction in construction activity.

The No Project Alternative would also avoid impacts related to sensitive habitats and wetlands compared to the project as construction of the near-term projects would only occur within developed and previously disturbed areas of the campus. Therefore, this alternative would not result in direct or indirect effects on sensitive vegetation communities or jurisdictional waters or wetlands. As such, this alternative would result in less than significant impacts and would not be required to implement the mitigation measures identified for program-level impacts (BIO-1 and BIO-17 through BIO-20). Impacts to sensitive habitats and wetlands would be avoided compared to the project.

Cultural Resources (Historic Resources, Archaeological Resources, Human Remains)

As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.4.4.1, the near-term projects proposed under this alternative would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources, and no impact would occur. As implementation of the project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts even with implementation of mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4, this alternative would avoid the program-level impacts to historic resources.

Similarly, the near-term projects' ground disturbing activities would occur in low archaeological sensitivity areas and would therefore not affect unknown archaeological resources. Compared to the project, which would involve ground disturbing activity in moderate archaeological sensitivity areas and would require mitigation measure CUL-5 to reduce impacts to below a level of significance, this alternative would avoid impacts to archaeological resources and no mitigation would be required.

The No Project Alternative would result in similar but less intensive impacts to human remains compared to the project, as the amount of ground disturbing activity and the likelihood of inadvertently encountering previously unknown human remains would be reduced. As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.4.4.3, the near-term projects have the potential to disturb human remains, though unlikely. Mitigation measure CUL-6 would continue to apply to the near-term projects under this alternative, which would reduce impacts to human remains to below a level of significance, similar to the project. Overall, the severity of these less than significant impacts would be reduced compared to the project due to reduced levels of ground disturbance and potential for inadvertent discoveries.

Geology and Soils (Paleontological Resources)

The No Project Alternative would result in less ground disturbance than the project but could still affect paleontological resources. As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.6.4.6, ground disturbing activities required for the construction of the near-term projects proposed under this alternative would occur in moderate and high sensitivity paleontological resource areas and could therefore result in the disturbance of paleontological resources. Mitigation measures GEO-1 and GEO-4 would continue to apply to construction of the near-term projects under this alternative and, depending on the results of initial project review in mitigation measure GEO-1, mitigation measures GEO-2 and GEO-3 may also be required. Under this alternative, these mitigation measures would reduce impacts to paleontological resources to a level that is less than significant. Overall, the severity of impacts to paleontological resources would be reduced compared to the project due to reduced levels of disturbance and potential for inadvertent discoveries.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans)

As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.8.4.6, during construction of the near-term projects under this alternative, work affecting City of San Diego (City) streets would be subject to a Traffic Control Plan prepared to the satisfaction of the City; however, as the preparation of a similar plan for on-campus circulation is not mandated by existing policies, on-campus construction could temporarily impair emergency access. However, implementation of mitigation measure TRA-1 under this alternative would continue to reduce impacts related to construction-period emergency access to a level that is less than significant. Once operational, both of the near-term projects would be incorporated into the Mesa College campus evacuation plans and operation of the near-term projects would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. Overall, less construction activity would occur under this alternative and the temporary effects to emergency access and roadways during construction would be limited in duration and geographic extent compared to the project. Therefore, impacts related to emergency response and evacuation plans would be reduced compared to the project.

Noise (Increase in Ambient Noise Levels, Ground-Borne Vibration)

The No Project Alternative would result in less intensive impacts related to increases in ambient noise levels compared to the project, as the amount of construction would be reduced. As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.11.4.1, construction of the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project could generate a substantial temporary increase in noise and mitigation measure NOI-1 would continue to apply under this alternative to reduce temporary noise impacts below a level of significance. Operational noise impacts associated with the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project and construction and operational noise impacts associated with the Athletics Complex would remain less than significant. As only implementation of the

near-term projects would occur under this alternative, the significant program-level impacts that require implementation of mitigation measure NOI-2 for stationary source noise impacts would not occur. Overall, the No Project Alternative would result in reduced impacts related to noise compared to the project.

Similar to noise, ground-borne vibration under this alternative would be reduced with the lesser amount of construction but would not be avoided. As described in Section 3.11.4.2, construction of the near-term projects could temporarily generate excessive vibration at on-campus buildings in excess of the applicable thresholds. Mitigation measure NOI-3 would continue to be implemented for these projects under the No Project Alternative, which would reduce construction vibration impacts to a level that is less than significant, similar to the project. Once operational, the near-term projects would result in less than significant vibration impacts under this alternative. Vibration impacts would be similar to those identified for the project but reduced in duration and extent as there would be less construction compared to the project.

Transportation (Emergency Access)

Implementation of the near-term projects under this alternative would not cause permanent changes to City roadways that would result in inadequate emergency access but, as described in the analysis of hazards above, could result in temporary changes to emergency access within campus and on adjacent City roadways during construction. While temporary work affecting City streets would be subject to a Traffic Control Plan prepared to maintain emergency access, the preparation of a similar plan for on-campus circulation is not mandated by existing policies. Therefore, on-campus construction could temporarily impair emergency access, and this alternative would also implement mitigation measure TRA-1 to reduce impacts related to construction-period emergency access to a level that is less than significant. Overall, temporary effects to emergency access and public roadways during construction would be limited in duration and geographic extent compared to the project, and impacts related to emergency access would be reduced compared to the project.

Tribal Cultural Resources (Tribal Cultural Resources)

The No Project Alternative would reduce the potential to affect tribal cultural resources. As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.16.4.1, the near-term projects implemented under this alternative would be located within low archaeological sensitivity areas and would therefore not be required to implement mitigation measure CUL-5. The marginal potential to disturb human remains due to ground disturbing activities would remain and this alternative would continue to require mitigation measure CUL-6 to reduce impacts to tribal cultural resources to below a level of significance. Overall, impacts to tribal cultural resources would be reduced compared to the project due to reduced levels of ground disturbance.

Wildfire (Emergency Plans)

Implementation of the near-term projects under this alternative would not cause permanent changes to emergency plans but could result in temporary changes to emergency access within campus and on adjacent City roadways during construction, though less construction would occur than for the project. As described in the project-level analysis in Section 3.18.4.1, temporary work affecting City streets would be subject to a Traffic Control Plan prepared to the satisfaction of the City; however, the preparation of a similar plan for on-campus circulation is not mandated by existing policies. With implementation of mitigation measure TRA-1, impacts related to on-campus construction-period

emergency access would also be less than significant under the No Project Alternative, similar to the project. Operation of this alternative would not impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan and no mitigation would be required. Overall, temporary effects related to implementation of emergency plans during construction would be limited in duration and geographic extent compared to the project, and impacts would be reduced.

6.5.1.2 Ability to Accomplish Project Objectives

The No Project Alternative would make progress towards multiple Project Objectives but would not fulfill these objectives to the same extent as the project. Focusing only on the near-term projects and other minor campus improvements under this alternative would conflict with project objectives to accommodate student growth and increase capacity to meet programming needs on campus (Project Objectives 1 and 2). Although implementation of the near-term projects and other internal renovations under this alternative would still allow the District to partially achieve the educational programming and student support goals outlined in Project Objectives 4 and 5, they would be achieved to a lesser extent as the strategic educational vision of the CMP would not be fully realized and implemented. The ability for students to enroll in on-campus courses could be limited without increases in building capacity.

Project Objective 3 would be achieved through the construction of the Performing Arts and Administration Center and Parking Structure project, as parking spaces removed from Lot 1 during construction would be replaced within the proposed parking structure to maintain the campus parking ratio. Project Objective 6 would not be achieved under this alternative as the long-term projects addressing campus entries would not be implemented. However, Project Objective 7 could be partially achieved under this alternative, as campus connectivity improvements would occur through the near-term projects but the overall vision for pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation through campus would not be achieved. Project Objectives 8 and 9 would be achieved for the near-term projects as the District would implement sustainability features and minimize the loss of instructional space during construction; however, the campus sustainability improvements associated with new construction replacing additional aging buildings in the long-term would not be realized. In summary, this alternative would accomplish two objectives (Project Objective 3 and 8), partially fulfill four objectives (Project Objectives 4, 5, 7, and 9), and not achieve three objectives (Project Objectives 1, 2, and 6).

6.5.2 Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative

The Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would not include alterations to the historical resources on campus identified as having the potential to be affected by future campus projects (refer to Section 3.4, *Cultural Resources*). The historical resources include: the Fine Arts Building (Building FA), Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2; two buildings), and Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6; six buildings). Avoidance of impacts to these historic resources would affect the ability to implement the West Entrance project, as removal of the Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings would not occur, and the Eastern Housing Option project, which is planned adjacent to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District. This alternative could include redesign of the West Entrance project to avoid removal of the Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings, or exclusion of the West Entrance project as a whole. As the impact of the Eastern Housing Option project would be indirect rather than direct, a project design that retains the integrity of the historic district as a historical resource may also be feasible to retain the purpose of this housing project while avoiding indirect impacts to the historic district. Under this alternative, the total GSF of campus

buildings and on-campus student enrollment growth is assumed to remain the same as proposed with the project.

6.5.2.1 Impact Analysis

Aesthetics (Light and Glare)

Under the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative, the historical resources on campus would be avoided, which would not substantially alter light and glare impacts. Temporary light and glare impacts associated with construction were determined to be less than significant and would remain less than significant under this alternative as construction lighting, if necessary, would be temporary and short-term. However, once operational, there is the potential for sources of light and glare generated by the projects implemented under this alternative, consistent with the project, to result in light spillover or new sources of glare that affect adjacent land uses, and mitigation measures AES-1 and AES-2 would be required to reduce these impacts below a level of significance. Overall, impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Biological Resources (Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, Wetlands)

As this alternative would avoid the historic resources identified on campus but would still involve construction and demolition activity in other locations on campus, potential impacts to special-status species, sensitive habitats, and wetlands would occur in a similar manner as the project. As discussed further in Section 3.3.4.1, development implemented on campus could result in direct and indirect impacts to special-status species. As such, similar to the project, this alternative would require implementation of mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-16, which would reduce impacts to a level that is less than significant. Further, while no specific improvements are currently proposed to expand campus facilities into sensitive vegetation communities under the project or the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative, future projects could encroach into these communities where improvements occur near the edge of existing development or require grading or utility connections through these areas. As such, this alternative would continue to implement mitigation measures BIO-1, BIO-17, and BIO-18 to reduce impacts to sensitive habitats to a less than significant level.

Although this alternative would include redesign of the West Entrance project to avoid removal of the Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings, there would still be the potential for adverse effects to potentially jurisdictional features that occur adjacent to the Genesee Avenue and Marlesta Drive intersection. This alternative would continue to implement mitigation measures BIO-19 and BIO-20 to reduce potential impacts to wetlands to a less than significant level. Overall, impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Cultural Resources (Historic Resources, Archaeological Resources, Human Remains)

The Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would not include alterations to the historical resources on campus: the Fine Arts building (Building FA), the Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage (Building P2) buildings, and the six buildings contributing to the Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6). Maintenance and repairs that maintain the integrity and character-defining features of the historic resources would not result in significant impacts to these resources. Therefore, this alternative would not result in changes to the significance of a historical resource as it would not conflict with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. As such, this alternative would result in less than significant impacts to historic resources and would not be required to

implement mitigation measures CUL-1 through CUL-4. Under this alternative, the significant and unavoidable impact to historic resources associated with the project would be avoided, and impacts to historic resources would instead be less than significant with no mitigation required, representing a reduced impact compared to the project.

While some locations of construction would be adjusted under this alternative, ground disturbance within areas of moderate archaeological sensitivity would continue to have the potential to affect archaeological resources. Ground disturbance could also result in disturbance of human remains. As shown on Figure 3.4-1, Building P2 is within a moderate archaeological sensitivity area, while the remaining historic structures are located in low archaeological sensitivity areas. As the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would avoid removal of Building P2 but would still involve construction and demolition activity on the campus in other moderate archaeological sensitivity areas, the cultural resources monitoring program outlined in mitigation measure CUL-5 would continue to be implemented for ground disturbance under this alternative in a similar manner to the project. Similarly, mitigation measure CUL-6 would be implemented for all projects to reduce impacts to human remains below a level of significance. Impacts to archaeological resources and human remains would be reduced below a level of significance with mitigation, consistent with the impacts of the project.

Geology and Soils (Paleontological Resources)

The Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would avoid demolition of the historic resources identified on campus but would still involve ground disturbing activity in other locations mapped as moderate or high paleontological sensitivity. As shown on Figure 3.6-2, Building P2 and Building FA are underlain by high paleontological sensitivity areas, while Buildings Z1-Z6 are underlain by a moderate paleontological sensitivity area. Although these areas would be avoided under this alternative, the campus is entirely underlain by either high or moderate paleontological sensitivity areas and other development projects would be required to implement mitigation measures GEO-1 through GEO-4, as applicable. These measures would reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources below a level of significance under this alternative, and impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans)

As this alternative would avoid the historic resources identified on campus but would still involve construction activity across the campus, this alternative could also interfere with emergency access on campus. As discussed in Section 3.8.4.6, the project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan but could interfere with emergency access to campus through construction-period road closures on campus. Similar to the project, construction of projects under this alternative would be required to comply with mitigation measure TRA-1, which would reduce impacts related to emergency response on campus below a level of significance. Impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Noise (Increase in Ambient Noise Levels, Ground-Borne Vibration)

While development under this alternative could occur in slightly different locations on campus compared to the project, the potential to generate noise and vibration during construction exceeding applicable thresholds would remain. As discussed in Section 3.11.4.1, the project could generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels during construction within 185 feet of a noise-sensitive land use (NSLU), or within the distances identified in Table 3.11-5 for specific activities. Construction could also result in the generation of excessive ground-borne vibration at vibration-

sensitive locations on and surrounding the campus. Mitigation measure NOI-1 would be required to reduce construction period noise and mitigation measure NOI-3 would be required to avoid significant vibration during construction. With implementation of these mitigation measures, construction period noise and vibration impacts would be reduced below a level of significance. Construction impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Once operational, similar sources of noise to the project would result under this alternative, including stationary equipment. This alternative would not alter vehicular traffic volumes and traffic noise impacts would remain less than significant. However, campus development projects would require new mechanical equipment that could generate noise levels in excess of the applicable thresholds. Consistent with the project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation measure NOI-2 to assess proposed stationary noise sources within identified screening distances and apply identified site-specific design features, if needed, to reduce noise levels at neighboring uses. Overall, impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Transportation (Emergency Access)

As the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would still involve construction activity across the campus, this alternative could also interfere with on-campus emergency access during construction. The District would be required to implement mitigation measure TRA-1 to reduce impacts below a level of significance, similar to the project. Additionally, the individual development projects proposed under this alternative would be required to provide or maintain adequate emergency access in accordance with building code requirements, including those that address fire truck lanes, hose pull distances, and security systems, and operational impacts would remain less than significant. Overall, impacts of this alternative would be similar to the project.

Tribal Cultural Resources (Tribal Cultural Resources)

As this alternative would still involve ground-disturbing activities on campus in areas identified as moderate archaeological resource sensitivity, this alternative would have the potential to affect tribal cultural resources, including archaeological sites, traditional gathering areas, or other areas of traditional use. Mitigation measure CUL-5 would apply to projects located in moderate sensitivity areas (see Figure 3.4-1) and mitigation measure CUL-6 would apply to all projects in the event human remains are encountered. This mitigation framework would reduce impacts below a level of significance, consistent with the project. Overall, impacts of this alternative would be similar to the project.

Wildfire (Emergency Plans)

As this alternative would avoid historic resources identified on campus but would still involve construction activity across the campus, impacts related to construction-period road closures on campus would also be significant prior to mitigation. As discussed in Section 3.18.4.1, implementation of the CMP would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, which would remain the case under this alternative. To address the potential to interfere with emergency access through construction-period road closures on campus, the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would also implement mitigation measure TRA-1 to reduce impacts to a level that is less than significant. Impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

6.5.2.2 Ability to Accomplish Project Objectives

As discussed above, the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would not include alterations to the historical resources on campus, which include: the Fine Arts Building (Building FA), Nursery & Landscape Technology Storage buildings (Building P2; two buildings), and Mesa College Design Center Historic District (Buildings Z1-Z6; six buildings). Under this alternative, however, the total GSF of campus buildings and on-campus student enrollment growth is assumed to remain the same as with the project. It is assumed that redesign of the West Entrance project and the Eastern Housing Option project could occur such that implementation of these improvements could proceed without significant impacts to these resources. Therefore, this alternative would allow the District to meet multiple Project Objectives related to new facilities for Mesa College programming.

This alternative would achieve Project Objectives 1, 2, 4, and 5 through the provision of educational and student support facilities envisioned in the CMP while avoiding significant impacts to historic resources. As the overall buildout potential would remain consistent with the project, this alternative would accommodate projected growth in on-campus student enrollment through upgraded and reorganized facilities supporting campus programming.

Project Objectives 3, 8, and 9 would also be achieved under this alternative, as sufficient parking would still be provided across campus, sustainability features would continue to be provided in new facilities, and instructional space interruptions would be minimized as feasible consistent with the project. However, if the West Entrance project is excluded rather than redesigned under this alternative or substantially altered compared to the vision in the CMP, it could result in a conflict with Project Objective 6 and reduce the ability to achieve Project Objective 7 by not providing improvements to this campus entrance. Pedestrian connectivity across the campus core could still be improved under this alternative (Project Objective 7) but the overall pedestrian network would be improved to a lesser extent than with the project.

The Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative would accomplish seven objectives (Project Objectives 1 through 5, 8, and 9), fulfill one to a lesser extent than the project (Project Objective 7), and not achieve one objective (Project Objective 6).

6.5.3 Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative

To avoid impacts to natural resources surrounding the developed portions of campus, this alternative would avoid construction within 100 feet of previously undeveloped land containing natural vegetation communities (Figure 3.3-1). Avoidance within this buffer would also avoid areas of moderate archaeological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.4-1) and the majority of areas of high paleontological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.6-2). Compared with the project, this alternative would exclude the West Entrance project and associated signage improvements, as well as modifications and/or bike lanes along the southern loop of Mesa College Drive. Under this alternative, the total GSF of campus buildings and on-campus student enrollment growth is assumed to remain the same as proposed with the project.

6.5.3.1 Impact Analysis

Aesthetics (Light and Glare)

Avoidance of construction within 100 feet of previously undeveloped land containing natural vegetation communities would not substantially alter light or glare compared to the project. Temporary light and

glare impacts would remain less than significant under this alternative as construction lighting, if necessary, would be temporary and short-term. However, once operational, there is the potential for sources of light and glare generated by the projects to result in light spillover or create new sources of glare that affect adjacent land uses. Consistent with the project, mitigation measures AES-1 and AES-2 would be required to reduce these impacts to below a level of significance under this alternative. Overall, impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Biological Resources (Special-Status Species, Sensitive Habitats, Wetlands)

As this alternative would avoid construction within 100 feet of previously undeveloped land containing natural vegetation communities, impacts to special-status species, sensitive habitats, and wetlands would be substantially reduced compared to the project. As discussed further in Section 3.3.4.1, the majority of campus development would occur within developed areas where biological resources impacts would be limited to potential effects to nesting birds and raptors. As such, mitigation measures BIO-5 and BIO-6 would be required under this alternative to address these impacts. On the other hand, avoidance of development within or surrounding undeveloped land containing natural vegetation communities would avoid the potential for direct and indirect impacts to other special-status species and their habitats, sensitive habitats, and wetlands. Therefore, mitigation measures BIO-1 through BIO-4 and BIO-7 through BIO-20 would not be required for this alternative. Overall, impacts would be reduced compared to those identified for the project.

Cultural Resources (Historic Resources, Archaeological Resources, Human Remains)

Under this alternative, construction within 100 feet of previously undeveloped land containing natural vegetation communities would be avoided, thereby avoiding construction within areas of moderate archaeological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.4-1) and the majority of areas of high paleontological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.6-2). Avoidance of construction within these areas would eliminate potential impacts to Building P2, which is located adjacent to undeveloped land, but could still involve impacts to Building FA and Buildings Z1-Z6. As such, although impacts would be less intensive due to the fewer number of historic resources affected, the mitigation framework identified for the project would continue to apply to this alternative and overall impacts would remain significant and unavoidable.

As areas of moderate archaeological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.4-1) coincide with undeveloped lands containing sensitive vegetation and would be avoided, impacts to archaeological resources would be less than significant with no mitigation required. As such, impacts to archaeological resources would be reduced under this alternative when compared to the project.

The minimal potential exists for unknown burials to be present within the campus, and ground-disturbing activities associated with the implementation of this alternative could disturb human remains, similar to the project. Mitigation measure CUL-6 would continue to be implemented in a similar manner to the project and would reduce impacts to human remains below a level of significance. Impacts to human remains would be similar to those identified for the project.

Geology and Soils (Paleontological Resources)

The Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative would avoid ground-disturbance in the majority of areas of high paleontological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.6-2), which occur within undeveloped areas, but would still involve ground disturbing activity on campus, and impacts to paleontological resources would occur in a similar but less intensive manner. Although the majority of

high paleontological sensitivity areas would be avoided under this alternative, the campus is entirely underlain by either high or moderate paleontological sensitivity areas. Therefore, impacts to paleontological resources could still occur under this alternative and future projects would be required to implement mitigation measures GEO-1 through GEO-4, as applicable. Under this alternative, these measures would reduce impacts to paleontological resources below a level of significance, and impacts would be reduced compared to those identified for the project due to the reduced ground disturbance in high sensitivity areas.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials (Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans)

As this alternative would avoid undeveloped areas but would still involve construction activity on campus, this alternative could also interfere with emergency access on campus. As discussed in Section 3.8.4.6, the project would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan but could interfere with emergency access to campus through construction-period road closures on campus. Similar to the project, construction of projects under this alternative would be required to comply with mitigation measure TRA-1, which would reduce impacts related to emergency access on campus below a level of significance. Impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Noise (Increase in Ambient Noise Levels, Ground-Borne Vibration)

While development under this alternative would occur in different locations than the project and would result in construction occurring further from residences to the northwest, the potential to generate noise and vibration during construction exceeding applicable thresholds would remain. Construction could exceed these thresholds when occurring within 185 feet of NSLUs and would therefore be required to implement mitigation measure NOI-1 to reduce construction period noise impacts below a level of significance, similar to the project. Similarly, when construction occurs within screening distances established for vibration, mitigation measure NOI-3 would be required to avoid significant vibration during construction. With implementation of these mitigation measures, construction period noise and vibration impacts would be reduced below a level of significance. Construction impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Once operational, similar sources of noise to the project would result under this alternative, including stationary equipment. This alternative would not alter vehicular traffic volumes and traffic noise impacts would remain less than significant. However, campus development projects would require new mechanical equipment that could generate noise levels in excess of the applicable thresholds. Consistent with the project, this alternative would be required to implement mitigation measure NOI-2 to assess proposed stationary noise sources within identified screening distances and apply identified site-specific design features, if needed, to reduce noise levels at neighboring uses. Overall, impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

Transportation (Emergency Access)

As the Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative would still involve construction and demolition activity in other locations on campus, this alternative could also interfere with on-campus emergency access during construction and would be required to implement TRA-1 to reduce impacts below a level of significance. Similar to the project, the individual development projects proposed under this alternative would be required to provide or maintain adequate emergency access in accordance with building code requirements, including those that address fire truck lanes, hose pull distances, and

security systems, and operational impacts would remain less than significant. Overall, impacts of this alternative would be similar to the project.

Tribal Cultural Resources (Tribal Cultural Resources)

As the Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative would avoid areas of moderate archaeological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.4-1), this alternative is not anticipated to affect tribal cultural resources and would not require implementation of mitigation measure CUL-5. However, as this alternative would still involve ground disturbing activity on the remainder of the campus, mitigation measure CUL-6 would continue to be applied in the same manner as the project if human remains are encountered during construction and would reduce impacts below a level of significance. Overall, impacts would be reduced under this alternative compared to the project.

Wildfire (Emergency Plans)

As this alternative would avoid biological and cultural resources identified on campus but would still involve construction activity across campus, impacts related to construction-period road closures on campus would also be significant prior to mitigation. As discussed in Section 3.18.4.1, implementation of the CMP would not substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan, which would remain the case under this alternative. Therefore, the Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative would also implement mitigation measure TRA-1 to reduce construction impacts to a level that is less than significant. Impacts would be similar to those identified for the project.

6.5.3.2 Ability to Accomplish Project Objectives

As discussed above, this alternative would avoid construction within 100 feet of previously undeveloped land containing natural vegetation communities, which in turn would also avoid construction in areas of moderate archaeological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.4-1) and the majority of areas of high paleontological resource sensitivity (Figure 3.6-2). This alternative would exclude the West Entrance project and associated signage improvements, as well as modifications and/or bike lanes along the southern loop of Mesa College Drive. Under this alternative, the total GSF of campus buildings and on-campus student enrollment growth is assumed to remain the same as proposed with the project.

As the primary educational and student support facilities envisioned in the CMP would still be implemented under this alternative, Project Objectives 1, 2, 4, and 5 would be achieved. The overall buildout potential would remain consistent with the project; therefore, this alternative would accommodate projected growth in on-campus student enrollment through upgraded and reorganized facilities supporting campus programming.

This alternative would also achieve Project Objectives 3, 8, and 9, as sufficient parking would still be provided across campus, sustainability features would continue to be provided in new facilities, and instructional space interruptions would be minimized as feasible. However, the exclusion of the West Entrance project with associated entry signage improvements and modifications to bike lanes while reducing vehicular use along the southern loop of Mesa College Drive would result in conflicts with Project Objectives 6 and 7. Without implementing these campus improvements, this alternative would not provide circulation patterns with enhanced arrival experiences and would not improve bicycle connectivity on campus.

The Biological and Cultural Resources Avoidance Alternative would accomplish seven objectives (Project Objectives 1 through 5, 8, and 9) but would not achieve two objectives (Project Objectives 6 and 7).

6.6 Environmentally Superior Alternative

An EIR is required to identify an environmentally superior alternative among the alternatives analyzed. The environmentally superior alternative is typically the alternative having the fewest significant environmental impacts or having the greatest ability to avoid or substantially reduce significant environmental impacts associated with the project. If the No Project Alternative is identified as the environmentally superior alternative, CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2) also requires that the EIR identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives.

Based on a comparison of the overall environmental impacts for the described alternatives (refer to Table 6-1), the No Project Alternative (Near-Term Projects Only) is identified as the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The No Project Alternative would eliminate the project's significant and unavoidable impact associated with historic resources. The severity of the impacts that were determined to be less than significant with mitigation under this alternative would be reduced compared to the impacts of the project due to the reduction in construction and development. Out of the nine stated objectives, the No Project Alternative would be able to fulfill two objectives, partially fulfill four objectives, and not fulfill three objectives.

Since the No Project Alternative is selected as the environmentally superior alternative, the PEIR shall also identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.6(e)(2). Of the remaining alternatives, the environmentally superior alternative would be the Historic Resource Avoidance Alternative. Significant and unavoidable impacts associated with historic resources would be avoided while remaining impacts that were determined to be less than significant with mitigation under this alternative would be similar to the impacts of the project. Out of the nine stated objectives, this alternative would be able to fulfill seven objectives, partially fulfill one objective, and not fulfill one objective.

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