

Date: February 11, 2008

To: Board of Trustees of the Santa Monica Community College District

Subject: Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Monica Community College District Adopting the Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and Approving the Student Services Replacement, Bookstore Modernization, and Pico Promenade Improvements Project

1. Summary

This report recommends that the Board of Trustees approve a resolution adopting the proposed Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (“Final IS/MND”) and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (“MMRP”) and approving the Student Services Replacement, Bookstore Modernization, and Pico Promenade Improvements Project (“Project”).

The Project implements the final phase of SMC’s Facilities Master Plan, and has received local and State funding. The Project will be a major transformation of the face of the College along Pico Boulevard. A Pico Boulevard Promenade, with a formal campus entry and new landscaping areas, will transform the image and impression of the SMC campus by its community connectivity and approach.

The Student Services Replacement building will establish a superior connection between the Santa Monica community and its College. The building will serve as a gateway to the College and as a student’s first contact and matriculation through the College experience. The building consolidates and replaces various student services facilities scattered throughout the campus.

Surface parking will be replaced underground and campus parking inventory will be restored to pre-earthquake levels without increasing the number of classroom seats. Signage will be added to provide real-time parking availability and to help reduce traffic delays. A contemplated City project appearing on the “related projects list” would consolidate two bus stops along Pico Boulevard to one stop further reducing traffic delays.

Additionally, the ground floor of Drescher Hall will be modified to modernize the campus bookstore and to become a hub of student activity.

The Board of Trustees has previously authorized architectural pre-planning for the Student Services Replacement building in September 2004 and architectural planning for the Student Services Replacement building and other campus improvements in May 2007. The proposed Project has been developed in consultation with Student Services users and has been circulated to campus constituencies, to departments within the City of Santa Monica, to neighbors, and to the community and public for review and comment.

A Draft Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (“IS/MND”) for the Project has also been circulated and is before the Board for a public hearing. Following the conclusion of the public hearing, it is recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the Final

IS/MND. As established by the Final IS/MND, the Project's potential impacts can be fully mitigated to levels of insignificance. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (attached to the proposed resolution) ensures these mitigation measures will be achieved. Approval of the Project is also contained within the resolution before the Board.

Should the Board of Trustees approve the Project, two related items are also before the Board in tonight's agenda. These provide for architectural services for the Bookstore Modernization component of the Project and also architectural services for immediate landscaping and signage improvements on Pico Boulevard.

Background

Facilities Master Plan

The Facilities Master Plan, adopted in January 1998 by the Board of Trustees, organizes a series of program elements, or projects, into six phases. The proposed Project incorporates elements of the final phase of the Master Plan and accommodates an additional element postponed from an earlier phase.

The purposes of the Master Plan are to support the educational vision and mission of the College, to bring a new physical order to the campus, and to provide a renewed presence and image to the neighboring community.

The Plan assists the College in implementing various recovery projects needed as a result of the damage caused by the 1994 Northridge earthquake. Undertaking repairs requires lengthy processes due to the lack of availability of interim space on campus.

The Plan also addresses issues of circulation and access, safety and modernization, and the retirement of outdated temporary buildings on the main campus.

The incorporated elements include a replacement student services and administration building, an entry plaza, Pico Promenade improvements, below grade parking, north campus building improvements, a public transit bus pull out area, and related demolitions.

Local and State Funding

The elements of the Project are to be financed from Measures U and S, approved by Santa Monica and Malibu voters in March 2002 and in November 2004; from a 2007 State capital outlay allocation; and from future District lease revenue bonds.

The components of the Project to be financed from Measures U and S were approved by the Board of Trustees prior to submitting the measures to the electorate and were included in the bond election language as required under the provisions of Proposition 39.

The Board of Trustees authorized architectural planning for the Project in September 2004, and approved the Final Project Proposal (FPP) in May 2005 for submission to the

State for capital outlay funding. The State has approved the project for funding, and funding became available starting in July 2007.

The bookstore improvements will be financed from a future District lease revenue bond.

Selection of Architect and Planning Process

In early 2007, the District issued a Request for Qualifications for the planning and design of the Student Services Replacement building. A campus panel that included Student Services representatives interviewed three qualified firms. The Board of Trustees approved an agreement with Steinberg Architects for architectural services for the Student Services and Administration Project in May 2007.

Project planning leading to the proposed Project included workshop meetings with an oversight committee, workshop meetings with the user groups, a meeting with the City of Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus, a meeting with the City of Santa Monica Fire Department, a meeting with the City of Santa Monica Office of the City Manager, and meetings with the College's District Planning and Advisory Committee (DPAC) and the DPAC facility sub-committee.

Issues covered included College priorities, existing conditions analyses, building location options, building configurations, traffic and circulation analyses, program elements, construction phasing, and cost reviews. Given the prominent location of the Student Services Replacement building, the oversight committee recommended a proposed Project that now includes a north campus entry plaza, improvements to Drescher Hall, the relocation of a modernized campus bookstore to the ground floor of Drescher Hall, and landscape and signage improvements to the entire Pico Boulevard street frontage ("Pico Promenade").

Subsequently, the proposed Project and the accompanying environmental analysis were circulated for public comment beginning on December 7, 2007. The public comment process is described further below.

Proposed Project

Student Services Replacement Building

The proposed building would be located on a prominent site on the campus. Positioned in the northeastern quadrant of the campus fronting Pico Boulevard, the building would provide an important connection between the Santa Monica community and its College.

The building would serve as a gateway to the College, not only by its significant position and presence, but also functionally as a student's first contact and continuing services as a student matriculates through the College experience.

This building would become a significant campus focal point. It would consolidate various Student Services departments currently scattered throughout the campus. These services are in facilities that, due to their age and condition, do not provide the adequate

infrastructure required for today's activities; most of these facilities are not connected to a centrally monitored fire alarm system and lack fire sprinklers.

The functions within these facilities include: Admissions & Records, Financial Aid, Enrollment Development, Assessment, International Education, Disabled Students Programs & Services (DSPS), Scholarship, Calworks, Extended Opportunity Program & Services (EOPS), Counseling, and various other programs and services. The convergence of all major student services into one location would improve the outreach and access of all services available to the students at SMC while providing an efficiency of common shared spaces.

The Student Services Replacement building would be three levels above grade, including two full levels and a partial third level. The building would total approximately 53,505 assignable square feet (asf).

Underground Parking and Transit

A new three-level subterranean parking structure for approximately 500 cars would underlie the building, replacing campus surface parking along Pico Boulevard and restoring campus parking to pre-earthquake levels.

Critical components would include a parking information station, vehicular drive and passenger drop-off, and a generous parking concourse connection to the street level.

Real-time electronic parking availability information signage would be provided at various parking entry points along Pico Boulevard. This would help improve traffic circulation in approaching the campus.

With the input of Big Blue Bus (BBB), a separate project has been identified proposing to consolidate two bus stops along Pico to one stop. A parallel loading space that could accommodate bus pullout with ample transition space is part of this proposed project. This would also help reduce traffic congestion along Pico Boulevard.

The underground parking garage would replace 177 existing surface parking spaces and would result in a net increase of 323 parking spaces.

Bookstore

Renovation of Drescher Hall is a critical component to this plan. Its proximity to the Student Services building suggests that it be redefined as a hub of student activity. Relocation of the College bookstore to the ground floor of Drescher Hall would complement the adjacent Student Services building and reinforce the new campus gateway.

The area between Drescher Hall and Pico Boulevard would be transformed into an active zone supported by student concessions at the building's ground floor as well as the public transit stop at the street edge.

Exterior building treatments and enhanced landscape would update the existing building's appearance.

The Drescher Hall extension would be a single level connected to the existing ground floor. The extension would total approximately 8,500 asf.

Landscaping and Pico Promenade

In its highly visible and prominent location, the Student Services Replacement building would be a catalyst to help redefine the Pico Boulevard edge of the campus and provide a new identity for SMC.

This transformation would include the creation of a grand campus entry plaza and landscape area. This new promenade connection to the public way would define a formal campus entry that currently does not exist.

The Pico Boulevard Promenade would change the image and impression of the SMC campus by its community connectivity of view and approach.

Demolitions

Project site demolitions include the existing Music Complex and Concert Hall, the Amphitheater, the International Education building, the Admissions and Student Services complex, the coffee kiosk, and the Drescher Hall north wings. Other demolitions include the Counseling building, the Counseling Annex, and the Bursar's Office.

The project would not generate any increases to student, faculty, or administrative personnel and would result in a net decrease of 5,119 asf of campus related uses and a net reduction of 178 classroom seats. This includes the demolition and inactivation of approximately 67,124 asf and the development of approximately 62,005 asf.

Sustainability

The College aims to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification for the proposed Project. Based on well-founded scientific standards, LEED emphasizes state-of-the-art strategies for sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection, and indoor environmental quality. In aiming to achieve LEED certification, the College would increase environmental sustainability by reducing energy costs and increase the energy efficiency of the proposed Project and the SMC Main Campus as a whole.

The proposed Project would also include a connection to an existing City-owned reclaimed water line located under Pico Boulevard to the west of the SMC Campus. This connection would provide reclaimed irrigation to the landscaping components provided within the Project and could eventually provide the opportunity to expand reclaimed irrigation use throughout the Campus providing significant improvements for water conservation.

Beyond the standards incorporated within a LEED certification, the College also intends to achieve additional environmental benefit by designing the Project for future flexibility,

thereby extending the lifetime of the building, by promoting the shared use of space, and by integrating outdoor space into building functionality.

Project Documents

An electronic copy of the Student Services Replacement Design Study Booklet can be found on the SMC website http://www.smc.edu/facilities_student_services/default.html.

Overview of CEQA and the Public Review Process

Overview

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code (P.R.C.) Division 13, § 21000 et seq.) was enacted in 1970 with the main objective of providing public disclosure to inform decision makers and the public of the significant environmental effects of proposed activities and to require agencies to avoid or reduce the environmental effects by implementing feasible alternatives or mitigation measures. CEQA applies to all discretionary activities proposed to be carried out or approved by California public agencies, including state, regional, county, and local agencies. The proposed Student Services Replacement, Bookstore Modernization, and Pico Promenade Improvements Project requires discretionary approval from the Santa Monica Community College District Board of Trustees and, therefore, is subject to the environmental review requirements established under CEQA. For purposes of complying with CEQA, Santa Monica Community College District is identified as the Lead Agency for the proposed project.

The Final IS/MND was prepared in accordance with CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations (C.C.R.), Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, § 15000-15387, as amended), and the Santa Monica College Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA (January 2002).

Electronic copies of the proposed Final IS/MND and the MMRP can be found on the SMC website at http://www.smc.edu/facilities_student_services/default.html.

Public Review Process

A Notice of Intent to Adopt the Draft IS/MND for the Student Services Replacement, Bookstore Modernization, and Pico Promenade Improvements Project was published in the *Santa Monica Daily Press* on December 7, 2007, in compliance with CEQA and SMC CEQA Guidelines, and was published a second time on December 10, 2007 in the *Santa Monica Daily Press*.

The Notice of Intent and the Draft IS/MND (SCH No. 2007121028) were filed with the State Clearinghouse on December 6, 2007. Copies were mailed to various public agencies, posted on the Internet, and made available at the Administrative Offices of the College and the Main Branch of the Santa Monica Public Library.

The Draft IS/MND was made available for public comment for 40 days, beginning on December 7, 2007, and ending on January 16, 2008, including a one-week extension of

the original published termination date of the comment period. College representatives hosted community meetings twice on January 3rd and once again on January 9th, 2008. Newspaper ads concerning the community meetings were published on eight issues dates in the *Santa Monica Daily Press*; press coverage of the January 3rd community meeting was provided in at least four area news sources; and approximately 3,700 postcards were distributed to area residents concerning the January 9th community meeting.

The District received four written comments from State and regional agencies and three written comments from local individuals and organizations.

The Final IS/MND has been prepared and was finalized on February 1, 2008. The Final IS/MND consists of the following components: the Draft IS/MND with additions and corrections shown in redline strikeout; comments and recommendations received on the Draft IS/MND; a list of persons, organizations, and public agencies commenting on the Draft IS/MND; and the responses from the Lead Agency to the comment letters received during the public review period.

A public hearing for the purpose of considering the adoption of the proposed Final IS/MND and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and approving the Project has been set for the February 11, 2008, Board of Trustees regularly scheduled meeting. Members of the public will be permitted to provide comments to the Board of Trustees prior to any action being taken on the proposed Final IS/MND and proposed Project.

Notice of the public hearing was mailed to agencies and persons who commented on the Draft IS/MND. The Final IS/MND and this Staff Report were made available on the College's website. In addition, a newspaper ad regarding the public hearing was published in the *Santa Monica Daily Press* on February 1, 2008.

Scope and Content

The Final IS/MND identified certain potentially significant impacts with respect to Air Quality, Aesthetics, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Hydrology and Water Quality, Noise, Construction Impacts, and Mandatory Findings of Significance.

These impacts would be reduced to less-than-significant levels with the incorporation of mitigation measures required for the Project.

A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program is provided electronically as Attachment A.

Discussion

Based on agency comment during the review period, an additional mitigation measure has been added to the Final IS/MND, identifying the contact agency if soil contamination is suspected during construction.

Responses to comments from organizations and individuals during the review period are provided in the Final IS/MND. College response to key points follows.

Building Mass. It was suggested to move the building mass to the west. However, the planned building setback is approximately 95 feet west of the rear of the adjacent residential buildings, more than double what would be required under the Santa Monica Municipal Code. While the massing impact of the proposed building would be less than significant, the College will nonetheless propose design solutions that provide a substantial additional third floor setback.

Access Driveway Relocations. It was suggested to move the planned access driveways to the underground parking garage to the west. The primary entry driveway to the underground garage is already approximately 140 feet to the west from the rear of the adjacent residential buildings. The other driveway (which will serve as the exit driveway and as a secondary entry driveway) is approximately 95 feet from the rear of the adjacent residential building. There are no significant impacts from the proposed placement of these driveways. The driveways use existing campus roadways. Moving these driveways further to the west shortens the queuing space available and introduces new congestion onto Pico Boulevard. Moving these driveways also introduces new conflicts between pedestrian and vehicle circulation.

SMC Main Campus Access Closures. It was suggested to close two existing access ways into the SMC Main Campus, at Pearl Street and Lot 1 and at an east-west alleyway connecting Lot 1 to 20th Street. Both these access points have been in use for more than 50 years. Closing these access ways would introduce new congestion onto Pico Boulevard, onto 20th Street, onto Pearl Street, and possibly onto 16th Street as current traffic is redirected. Additionally, the Santa Monica College Police Department strongly opposes closing these access ways (a letter from SMC Interim Police Chief Gary Gallinot is at the end of this report). Closing these access ways would significantly increase emergency response time. There are no significant impacts from maintaining the current operation of these access ways, nor are there any unusual safety conditions regarding the current use of these access ways.

Maintenance of Landscaping. It was suggested to designate funding for maintenance of new landscaping along Pico Boulevard. It is College practice to develop an operational plan and to identify the operational costs and savings for new projects prior to award of bid for construction. This would include designating funds for maintenance of the new landscaping.

In discussions with the City of Santa Monica, the College and the City identified a number of cooperative efforts to complement the proposed Project. The College will continue to work with the City on these efforts during the schematic design and design development phases of the Project.

Recommendation

The Final IS/MND for the Student Services Replacement, Bookstore Modernization, and Pico Promenade Improvements Project has been prepared pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines and the Santa Monica College Implementation of CEQA Guidelines. The SMC Board of Trustees must approve the Final IS/MND prior to approval for the Project.

The accompanying resolution sets forth the findings necessary for the Board of Trustees to approve the Final IS/MND.

It is respectfully recommended that the Board of Trustees adopt the resolution entitled “Resolution of the Board of Trustees of the Santa Monica Community College District Adopting the proposed Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program and Approving the Student Services Replacement, Bookstore Modernization, and Pico Promenade Improvements Project.”

Prepared by:

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Brenda Benson, Interim Vice President, Student Services

Greg Brown, Director of Facility Planning



February 5, 2008

To: Brenda Benson, Vice-President Student Affairs (Acting)

From: Gary Gallinot, Interim Chief Campus Police

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Gallinot".

Re: Replacement Student Services Building and Vehicle Circulation

Thank you for the opportunity to review the design study for the Student Services Replacement, Bookstore Modernization, and Pico Promenade Improvements Project. It's wonderful that these much-needed new facilities will soon become a reality for your staff.

With regard to vehicle circulation and safety, I have the following comments:

1. Providing a dedicated drop-off lane will address an existing deficiency and improve passenger safety.
2. Providing a separate "through lane" will improve the queuing delays experienced at the campus kiosk in its current location and improve vehicle safety.
3. Maximizing the queuing distances from the traffic signal on Pico to the underground parking driveways will improve the current queuing and improve vehicle safety.
4. Maintaining the current access point into the Main Campus at Pearl Street and Lot 1 is essential for emergency response. Closing this access point would not be safe and would lead to reduced emergency access response time and increased congestion.
5. Maintaining the current access point into the Main Campus at the east-west alleyway south of Pico to Lot 1 is essential for emergency response. It would not be safe to close the alleyway off. It would lead to reduced emergency access response time and increased congestion.
6. The large light-well into the underground parking structure will be an important contribution to campus safety.

Please let me know if you have additional questions.