

# 3 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

This Draft EIR evaluates and discloses the environmental impacts associated with the 2035 Master Plan, in accordance with CEQA Section 21000 et seq. and the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR, Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 et seq.). Sections 3.1 through 3.14 of this Draft EIR present a discussion of regulatory background, existing conditions, environmental impacts associated with construction and operation of the project, mitigation measures to reduce the level of impact, and residual level of significance (i.e., after application of mitigation, including impacts that would remain significant and unavoidable after application of all feasible mitigation measures). Issues evaluated in these sections consist of the environmental topics identified for review in the NOP and IS prepared for the project (see Appendix A of this Draft EIR). Chapter 4, "Cumulative Impacts," presents an analysis of the project's impacts considered together with other past, present, and probable future projects producing related impacts, as required by Section 15130 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Chapter 5, "Alternatives," presents a reasonable range of alternatives and evaluates the environmental effects of those alternatives relative to the proposed project, as required by Section 15126.6 of the State CEQA Guidelines. Chapter 6, "Other CEQA Sections," includes an analysis of the project's growth inducing impacts, as required by Section 21100(b)(5) of CEQA.

## INTRODUCTION TO THE ANALYSIS

As required by the State CEQA Guidelines (CCR Section 15126.2), this Draft EIR identifies and focuses on the significant direct and indirect environmental effects of the project. Short-term effects are generally those associated with construction, and long-term effects are generally those associated with operation of the project. This chapter addresses the environmental setting, environmental impacts and mitigation measures associated with the project in relation to the following resource topics:

- ▶ Section 3.1, "Aesthetics";
- ▶ Section 3.2, "Agriculture and Forestry Resources";
- ▶ Section 3.3, "Air Quality";
- ▶ Section 3.4, "Archaeological, Historical, and Tribal Cultural Resources";
- ▶ Section 3.5, "Biological Resources";
- ▶ Section 3.6, "Energy";
- ▶ Section 3.7, "Geology and Soils";
- ▶ Section 3.8, "Greenhouse Gas Emissions";
- ▶ Section 3.9, "Hydrology and Water Quality";
- ▶ Section 3.10, "Noise";
- ▶ Section 3.11, "Population and Housing";
- ▶ Section 3.12, "Public Services and Recreation";
- ▶ Section 3.13, "Transportation"; and
- ▶ Section 3.14, "Utilities and Service Systems."

As noted in Chapter 1, "Introduction," the IS prepared for the 2035 Master Plan determined that impacts related to hazards and hazardous materials, land use and planning, and mineral resources did not require further evaluation as part of the Draft EIR. As part of the December 28, 2018 amendments to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines, Wildfire was added to Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines as an issue area potentially requiring analysis, however, impacts related to wildfire were already evaluated in the IS as part of its evaluation of potential hazards and hazardous materials impacts. Combined with the fact that the Master Plan Area is not located within a "Very High" fire hazard area (San Luis Obispo County n.d.), this issue does not require further evaluation as part of this Draft EIR. Sections 3.1 through 3.14 of this Draft EIR each include the following components.

**Regulatory Setting:** This subsection presents information on the laws, regulations, plans, and policies that relate to the issue area being discussed. Regulations originating from the federal, state, and local levels are each discussed as appropriate.

**Environmental Setting:** This subsection presents the existing environmental conditions on the project site (i.e., Master Plan Area) and in the surrounding area as appropriate, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15125. The discussions of the environmental setting focus on information relevant to the issue under evaluation. The extent of the environmental setting area evaluated (the project study area) differs among resources, depending on the locations where impacts would be expected. For example, air quality impacts are assessed for the air basin (macroscale) as well as the site vicinity (microscale), whereas aesthetic impacts are assessed for the project site vicinity only.

**Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures:** This subsection presents thresholds of significance and discusses potentially significant effects of the 2035 Master Plan on the existing environment, including the environment beyond the project boundaries, in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2. The methodology for impact analysis is described in each section, including technical studies upon which the analyses rely. The thresholds of significance are defined and thresholds for which the project would have no impact are disclosed and dismissed from further evaluation. Project impacts and mitigation measures are numbered sequentially in each subsection (Impact 3.2-1, Impact 3.2-2, Impact 3.2-3, etc.). A summary impact statement precedes a more detailed discussion of the environmental impact. The discussion includes the analysis, rationale, and substantial evidence upon which conclusions are drawn. The determination of level of significance of the impact is defined in bold text. A “less-than-significant” impact is one that would not result in a substantial adverse change in the physical environment. A “potentially significant” impact or “significant” impact is one that would result in a substantial adverse change in the physical environment; both are treated the same under CEQA in terms of procedural requirements and the need to identify feasible mitigation. Mitigation measures are identified, as feasible, to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, or compensate for significant or potentially significant impacts, in accordance with the State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4. Unless otherwise noted, the mitigation measures presented are recommended in the EIR for consideration by the State to adopt as conditions of approval.

Where an existing law, regulation, or permit specifies mandatory and prescriptive actions about how to fulfill the regulatory requirement as part of the project definition, leaving little discretion in its implementation, and would avoid an impact or maintain it at a less-than-significant level, the environmental protection afforded by the regulation is considered before determining impact significance. Where existing laws or regulations specify a mandatory permit process for future projects, performance standards without prescriptive actions to accomplish them, or other requirements that allow substantial discretion in how they are accomplished, or have a substantial compensatory component, the level of significance is determined before applying the influence of the regulatory requirements. In this circumstance, the impact would be potentially significant or significant, and the regulatory requirements would be included as a mitigation measure.

This subsection also describes whether mitigation measures would reduce project impacts to less- than-significant levels. Significant-and-unavoidable impacts are identified as appropriate in accordance with State CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.2(b). Significant-and-unavoidable impacts are also summarized in Chapter 6, “Other CEQA Sections.”

**References:** The full references associated with the parenthetical references found throughout Sections 3.1 through 3.14 can be found in Chapter 8, “References,” organized by section number.

## California State University Autonomy

Cal Poly is an entity of the CSU system, which is a constitutionally created state agency and is therefore not subject to local government planning and land use plans, policies, or regulations. Although there is no formal mechanism for joint planning or the exchange of ideas, Cal Poly may consider, for coordination purposes, aspects of local plans and policies for the communities surrounding the campus when it is appropriate. The proposed project (2035 Master Plan) would be subject to state and federal agency planning documents described herein but would not be bound by local or regional planning regulations or documents such as the City's General Plan or municipal code.

Cal Poly seeks to maintain an ongoing exchange of ideas and information and to pursue mutually acceptable solutions for issues that confront both the campus and its surrounding community. To foster this process, Cal Poly participates in, and communicates with, City of San Luis Obispo (City), County of San Luis Obispo (County) and community organizations and sponsors various meetings and briefings to keep local organizations, associations, and elected representatives apprised of ongoing planning effort and consider community input.

## STANDARD TERMINOLOGY

This Draft EIR uses the following standard terminology:

**"No impact"** means no change from existing conditions (no mitigation is needed).

**"Less-than-significant impact"** means no substantial adverse change in the physical environment (no mitigation is needed).

**"Potentially significant impact"** means an impact that might cause a substantial adverse change in the environment (mitigation is recommended because potentially significant impacts are treated as significant).

**"Significant impact"** means an impact that would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment (mitigation is recommended).

**"Significant and unavoidable impact"** means an impact that would cause a substantial adverse change in the physical environment and that cannot be avoided, even with the implementation of all feasible mitigation.

**"CSU"** refers to the California State University system as a whole.

**"Trustees"** refers to the CSU Board of Trustees, the CEQA Lead Agency for the 2035 Master Plan Draft EIR.

**"Cal Poly"** or **"University"** refers to California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

**"2035 Master Plan"** or **"project"** refers to the proposed California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo 2035 Master Plan, the plan intended to guide the land use patterns and accommodate growth through the year 2035. The proposed plan and anticipated environmental effects of development that would occur under the plan are evaluated in this EIR.

**"Master Plan Area"** or **"campus"** refers to 1,339 acres owned and operated by Cal Poly and includes the 855-acre main campus. It also includes some undeveloped areas of Cal Poly property to the east and northeast, which may include some recreational improvements under the 2035 Master Plan.

**"Main campus"** refers to the 855-acre main campus, which includes the four campus subareas (the Academic Core, East Campus, North Campus, and West Campus). Future development of new administrative, academic, housing, and utility-related structures would occur within the main campus under the 2035 Master Plan.

This page intentionally left blank.