

PRELIMINARY EXEMPTION ASSESSMENT

1. Name or description of project: Campus Center (new Administration Building)
2. Location: Cuesta College San Luis Obispo Campus, Highway 1, San Luis Obispo
3. Entity or person undertaking project:

A. San Luis Obispo County Community College District -Cuesta College

B. Other (Private)

(1) Name: _____

(2) Address: _____

4. Staff Determination:

The District Staff, having undertaken and completed a preliminary review of this project in accordance with the School District's *"Local Guidelines for Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)"* (refer to attached analysis) has concluded that this project does not require further environmental assessment because:

- a. The proposed action does not constitute a project under CEQA.
- b. The project is a Ministerial Project.
- c. The project is an Emergency Project.
- d. The project constitutes a feasibility or planning study.
- e. The project is categorically exempt.
Applicable Exemption Class: Class 14 (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15314)
Class 01 (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15314)
- f. The project is statutorily exempt.
Applicable Exemption Class: _____
- g. The project is otherwise exempt on the following basis: _____

- h. The project involves another public agency which constitutes the Lead Agency.
Name of Lead Agency: _____

Date:



Dan Troy

Staff

Preliminary Exemption Assessment Analysis

1. Campus History and Determination of Original Capacity

The campus has evolved and been added to for over 50 years. The baseline capacity for the purposes of the CEQA Class 14 Categorical Exemption is reflected in current enrollment of approximately 7,000 students.

The recent most capacity expansion in classrooms was the Instructional Building Project. The instructional building was the subject of a Mitigated Negative Declaration in 2015 and may be considered the baseline capacity as it established the pre-CEQA baseline for enrollment.

It is worth noting that in recent years, the Covid-19 Pandemic resulted in a decline of student enrollment between 2020/2021.

2. Proposed Action

The proposed Campus Center is a two story administration building containing College administration staff offices, conference rooms, meeting and support spaces, board rooms and a small café space.

The project includes demolition of existing Administration building, approximately 6,804 sf. The total proposed building area includes :

1st floor – 18,127 SF
2nd floor – 15,629 SF
Total Building – 33,756 GSF

The 33,756 GSF is classified as type II-B construction. The building will include a fire suppression system (fire sprinklers), fire alarm and smoke detection. Figure 1 attached shows the location on campus and Figure 2 delineates the scope of anticipated construction within the campus. The Campus Center building is not a classroom building and will not increase the student capacity. Services housed in the building are focused on first time students and include but are not limited to: financial aid, counseling, outreach, international student programs, fiscal services, multiple staff break rooms and conference, lobby and meeting spaces. The proposed café space is 800SF and centrally located to be oriented to the campus core, and (new) amphitheater seating.

Site improvements include rehabilitation and alteration to existing parking areas, parking for electric vehicles, a small amphitheater and planting and irrigation. Parking lot improvements include the expansion of existing Parking Lot #3 and #4; approximately 87 new parking spaces will be added over the existing configuration. A new bus stop will be provided along Romauldo Drive to improve the existing bus transit system on campus. Other improvements will be made through design and engineering to accommodate safe maneuvering, pedestrian crossings and street trees.

3. Previous environmental review

In 2015, the College adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration for a new Instructional Building, construction completed in 2018, herein incorporated by reference. This CEQA

document included mitigation measures to ensure that no significant impacts to the environment would result from the project. The MND identified potentially significant effects for biological resources, cultural resources and construction noise. All other study topics were not identified to have potential for significant effects and are therefore not deemed to be relevant to this PEA analysis because the Campus Center Building is of similar scope, size and setting to the Instructional Building.

The nature of these measures, discussed more fully in Section 4 below, is such that they are applicable to most general construction within the campus core. For this reason, this document is the basis for standard measures that will be included in the construction plan set for the Campus Center project.

4. Analysis of Potential for Significant Environmental Effects

- a. **Biological Resource:** The Instructional Building Initial Study / MND identified potential impacts on nesting birds and tree removal. The Campus Center Site has trees in proximity and will also remove 68 trees. The application of standard nesting bird surveys and replacement trees is identified in the *District Facilities Standards*. Pursuant to the Standards, any tree removed shall be replaced, at a 1:1 ratio. Adhering to the District Standards would avoid any significant impact to biological resources.
- b. **Cultural Resources:** There are no known or documented archaeological resources present on the site. However, the area is known to have had prehistoric occupation by Native Americans. The Initial Study for the Instructional Building concluded the likelihood of encountering cultural resources or human remains is minimal. Standard measures to address activities that could impact cultural resources were adopted. These measures are incorporated into the Campus Center Project Description and will be implemented by the District.
- c. **Short-term Construction Effects:** Construction noise was identified as a potentially significant short-term impact in the Instructional Building IS / MND. However, the standard of impact significance could be considered as overstating the impact. The cited standard was the Office of Planning and Research General Plan Guidelines. The noise standards suggested in this Guideline are not for temporary stationary noise sources, but rather for exposure of land uses, such as schools, to transportation noise, e.g. "community noise". In this case, schools would be subject to noise standards from adjoining land uses or noise sources. There is no explicit guide for noise within school grounds. A more appropriate guide for a noise standard would be the County of San Luis Obispo Noise Element policy 3.3.5 for stationary noise. Stationary noise is short term, episodic noise. The standard is applied adjoining properties, not to uses that might be present on the site of the construction activity. Therefore, the application of a standard for noise within the campus along with applicable mitigation is solely at the discretion of the District. Under the County policy, the standard for stationary noise control is the property line: a maximum of 70 decibels (dB). Using the Instructional Building table 9, noise is estimated at less than 70 dB at 600 feet from the source. The Campus Center site is over 1,000 feet from property lines. Therefore, no significant impact would result for construction noise.

5. Reasons for the Exemption Finding

Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines section 15300.2 (c) and (f), the above analysis was undertaken to determine any unusual circumstances exist that might result in a significant impact on the environment. On the basis on the evidence presented above no unusual circumstances exist that might result in significant effects on the environment.

The proposed project meets the criteria in the following CEQA Guidelines sections:

15301. EXISTING FACILITIES which state the exemption applies if the project consists of minor alteration involving negligible or no expansion of existing of existing topographical features. It is determined the project site improvements are eligible for a Class 01 Categorical Exemption.

- Class 1 exemption applies to the proposed improvements to existing parking lot area and campus open spaces around Building 8000/Campus Center. Existing streets and sidewalks gutters, bicycle and pedestrian facilities will be renovated as a part of the project. Additionally the pedestrian crossings, parking lot medians and addition of street trees and other proposed alterations to existing parking lot configuration will not create additional automobile lanes.

15314. MINOR ADDITIONS TO SCHOOLS which state the exemption applies if the project would not increase the original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classroom, whichever is less, it is determined the project is eligible for a Class 14 Categorical Exemption.

- Class 14 exemption applies to the Building /Campus Center.

ENTER

PROJECT LOCATION

file path: M

