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Making Conservation a California Way of Life

February 10, 2025

Charlie Yen, Director of Facilities Planning
Santa Monica Community College District
1900 Pico Boulevard
Santa Monica, CA 90405

RE: Santa Monica College 2024 Main Campus Master Plan Update– Notice of Preparation (NOP)
SCH #2025010279
GTS #07-LA-2025-04722
LA-10/PM 3.092

Dear Charlie Yen,

The 2024 Main Campus Master Plan Update consists of demolition of existing temporary and permanent buildings, and the construction of new buildings. The Project would also include renovations to two existing buildings (the Physical and Life Science Complex and the Library and Media Center). The Project would create various new and enhanced open spaces throughout the campus, including landscaping the proposed new Student Union building, a Welcome Lawn, an outdoor amphitheater, a Science Quad, the Tri (triangular open space area), and New Quad. The Proposed Project would generally retain the current vehicular circulation and access points and existing parking supply. The Project would be constructed in three phases beginning in 2025 with final buildout anticipated to be completed by 2035.

Local street access to the Project Site is provided by Pico Boulevard, Pearl Street, 18th Court, and 16th Street. Pico Boulevard is a two-way street providing two travel lanes in each direction. Street parking is predominantly restricted along Pico Boulevard adjacent to the Project Site, with the exception of minimal metered parking spaces. Pearl Street is a two-way street providing one travel lane in each direction. Street parking is provided along the north and south sides of Pearl Street. There is one designated bike lane on the south side of the street. 18th Court is a two-way alley providing access to residential

parking spaces for the residences fronting 20th Street. 16th Street is a two-way street providing one travel lane in each direction with metered street parking on the east side of the street and permit only parking on the west side of the street. There is one designated bike lane on the east side of the street.

There are a total of 2,860 vehicle parking spaces located in a combination of above grade and below grade parking structures and surface parking lots. The Main Campus is supported by a series of shuttle parking lots, parking at other campus locations, and an extensive network of bus and shuttle services. No new subterranean parking is proposed.

After reviewing the NOP, Caltrans has the following comments:

The SMC 2024 Campus Master Plan Update preserves the goals of the 2010 Master Plan Update and provides a framework for identifying the required improvements to the SMC Main Campus environment, facilities, and infrastructure to support students and elevate the campus experience. With the implementation of the Proposed Project, the total parking provided on campus would be 2,858 vehicle spaces, resulting in a net reduction of two parking spaces. The IS states that the Project is deemed to be sufficient to accommodate both current usage and future demand. Caltrans advises that the Project explore the proposed strategies to enhance the safety and experience for non-vehicle road users, particularly during peak hours. The 2024 Campus Master Plan establishes several exemplary goals:

- Expanding setbacks and pedestrian pathways to create a continuous and improved pedestrian experience along Pico Boulevard.

- Adding streetscape elements such as plantings, trees, seating, and lighting consistent with other areas of the SMC campus and aligned with campus sustainability goals.

If surface parking must be built, it is recommended that it does not face the street directly. For sites such as the new Art Replacement building and its adjacent surface parking lot, Caltrans recommends adding frontage to encourage recreational walking and transit use, while aligning with the 2024 Campus Master Plan. Whenever possible, reducing the amount of excess car parking supplied acts against enabling driving over other methods of transportation. Research indicates that removing car parking is a proven method of reducing trip demand, improving housing affordability, and encouraging active modes of

transportation.

Currently, there are 302 bicycle parking spaces on campus and Class II bike facilities within the Project area. As shown in IS Figure 16, bicycle parking is located along the perimeter of the campus and adjacent to bike lanes along 16th Street and Pearl Street. There are a total of three Metro bike sharing locations on campus: one on Pico Boulevard with 12 bikes available, one on Pearl Street with six bikes available, and one adjacent to the Math and Science building. Caltrans supports the inclusion of a new bike repair station in the Project scope. It is generally recommended that bike lanes be upgraded to Class IV or Class II facilities to provide the highest level of safety for bicyclists. As such, the Project may maintain existing bicycle access and circulation patterns.

As a reminder, any transportation of heavy construction equipment and/or materials that requires the use of oversized transport vehicles on State Highways will require a Caltrans transportation permit. Caltrans recommends limiting construction traffic to off-peak periods to minimize the potential impact on State facilities. If construction traffic is expected to cause issues on any State facilities, please submit a construction traffic control plan detailing these issues for Caltrans' review. We look forward to the coordination of our efforts to ensure potential impacts to the highway facilities and traveling public are discussed and addressed before work begins.

If you have any questions, please contact project coordinator Frances Duong, at frances.duong@dot.ca.gov and refer to GTS #07-LA-2025-04722.

Sincerely,

Anthony Higgins

Anthony Higgins
Acting LDR Branch Chief

Cc: State Clearinghouse