Notice of Preparation

October 31, 2006

To: Reviewing Agencies

Re: Master's College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503
   SCH# 2006101171

Attached for your review and comment is the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Master's College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503 draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

Responsible agencies must transmit their comments on the scope and content of the NOP, focusing on specific information related to their own statutory responsibility, within 30 days of receipt of the NOP from the Lead Agency. This is a courtesy notice provided by the State Clearinghouse with a reminder for you to comment in a timely manner. We encourage other agencies to also respond to this notice and express their concerns early in the environmental review process.

Please direct your comments to:

   Aimee Schwimmer
   City of Santa Clarita
   23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
   Santa Clarita, CA 91355

with a copy to the State Clearinghouse in the Office of Planning and Research. Please refer to the SCH number noted above in all correspondence concerning this project.

If you have any questions about the environmental document review process, please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613.

Sincerely,

Scott Morgan
Senior Planner, State Clearinghouse

Attachments
cc: Lead Agency
SCH# 2006101171  
Project Title Master's College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503  
Lead Agency Santa Clarita, City of  

Type NOP Notice of Preparation  
Description This initial study has been prepared for the compilation and implementation of a Master Plan for the Master's College, associated land use designation amendments and tentative tract map for the creation of lots of land owned by The Master's College.  

Lead Agency Contact  
Name Aimee Schwimmer  
Agency City of Santa Clarita  
Phone 661-255-4330  
Fax  
email  
Address 23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300  
City Santa Clarita  
State CA  
Zip 91355  

Project Location  
County Los Angeles  
City Santa Clarita  
Region  
Cross Streets Placerita Canyon Road  
Parcel No. 2833-014-015, 021 thru 024/2833-012-016, 17, 18/2833-013-020-024, 27,  
Township 29/2833-006-015-017/2834-0  

Proximity to:  
Highways  
Airports  
Railways  
Waterways  
Schools  
Land Use GP Des. and Zoning: Residential Low (RL), Private Edution (PE), Industrial Commercial (IC), Open Space (OS)  

Project Issues Aesthetic/Visual; Biological Resources; Public Services; Water Quality; Noise; Air Quality; Geologic/Seismic; Landuse; Population/Housing Balance; Traffic/Circulation; Other Issues  

Reviewing Agencies Resources Agency; Department of Conservation; Department of Forestry and Fire Protection; Department of Parks and Recreation; Department of Water Resources; Department of Fish and Game, Region 5; Department of Health Services; Native American Heritage Commission; California Highway Patrol; Caltrans, District 7; Department of Toxic Substances Control; Regional Water Quality Control Board, Region 4  

Date Received 10/31/2006  
Start of Review 10/31/2006  

Note: Blanks in data fields result from insufficient information provided by lead agency.
## NOP Distribution List

### Resources Agency
- Fish & Game Region 3
  - Robert Floerke
- Fish & Game Region 4
  - Julie Vance
- Fish & Game Region 5
  - Don Chadwick, Habitat Conservation Program
- Fish & Game Region 6
  - Gabrina Gatchel, Habitat Conservation Program
- Fish & Game Region 6 I/M
  - Tammy Allen, Inyo/Mono, Habitat Conservation Program
- Dept. of Fish & Game M
  - George Isaac
  - Marine Region

### County: Los Angeles
- Public Utilities Commission
  - Ken Lewis
- State Lands Commission
  - Jean Sarino
- Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA)
  - Cherry Jacques

### Business, Trans & Housing
- Caltrans - Division of Aeronautics
  - Sandy Hesnard
- Caltrans - Planning
  - Terri Pencovic
- California Highway Patrol
  - Shirley Kelly, Office of Special Projects
- Housing & Community Development
  - Lisa Nichols, Housing Policy Division

### Other Departments
- Food & Agriculture
  - Steve Shaffer, Dept. of Food and Agriculture
- Depart. of General Services
  - Robert Sleppy, Environmental Services Section
- Dept. of Health Services
  - Veronica Malloy, Dept. of Health/Drinking Water

### Independent Commissions, Boards
- Delta Protection Commission
  - Debby Eddy
- Office of Emergency Services
  - Dennis Castrillo
- Governor's Office of Planning & Research
  -_state clearinghouse
- Native American Heritage Comm.
  - Debbie Treadway

### Cal EPA
- Air Resources Board
  - Jim Lerner, Transportation Projects
  - Ravi Ramalingam, Industrial Projects
  - Mike Tollestrup

### Dept. of Transportation
- Caltrans, District 1
  - Rex Jackman
- Caltrans, District 2
  - Marcelino Gonzalez
- Caltrans, District 3
  - Jeff Pulverman
- Caltrans, District 4
  - Tim Sable
- Caltrans, District 5
  - David Murray
- Caltrans, District 6
  - Marc Birnbaum
- Caltrans, District 7
  - Cheryl J. Powell

### Caltrans, District 8
- Dan Kopulsky
- Caltrans, District 9
- Gayle Rosander
- Caltrans, District 10
- Tom Dumas
- Caltrans, District 11
- Mario Osco
- Caltrans, District 12
- Bob Joseph

### Cal EPA
- Air Resources Board
  - Jim Lerner, Transportation Projects
  - Ravi Ramalingam, Industrial Projects
  - Mike Tollestrup

### California Integrated Waste Management Board
- Sue O'Leary

### State Water Resources Control Board
- Jim Hockenberry, Division of Financial Assistance

### State Water Resources Control Board
- Student Intern, 401 Water Quality Certification Unit
  - Division of Water Quality

### State Water Resources Control Board
- Steven Herrera, Division of Water Rights

### Dept. of Toxic Substances Control
- CEGA Tracking Center

### Department of Pesticide Regulation
- Other

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### SCH# 2006101171

- Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB)
  - RWQCB 1
    - Cathleen Hudson, North Coast Region (1)
  - RWQCB 2
    - Environmental Document Coordinator
    - San Francisco Bay Region (2)
  - RWQCB 3
    - Central Coast Region (3)
  - RWQCB 4
    - Teresa Rodgers, Los Angeles Region (4)
  - RWQCB 55
    - Central Valley Region (5)
  - RWQCB 5F
    - Central Valley Region (5)
    - Fresno Branch Office
  - RWQCB 5R
    - Central Valley Region (6)
    - Redding Branch Office
  - RWQCB 6
    - Lahontan Region (6)
  - RWQCB 6V
    - Lahontan Region (6)
    - Victorville Branch Office
  - RWQCB 7
    - Colorado River Basin Region (7)
  - RWQCB 8
    - Santa Ana Region (8)
  - RWQCB 9
    - San Diego Region (9)

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Last Updated on 04/28/06
November 1, 2006

File No.: 540.9107.InitialStudy 04-496

Aimee Schwimmer, AICP, Associate Planner
City of Santa Clarita, Suite 300
23920 Valencia Blvd.
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

I have received and reviewed the Notice of Preparation regarding the Master's College master plan; Case # 04-496. While it appears the project may have a significant impact on the local roads and City of Santa Clarita infrastructure, it does not appear it will adversely affect the operations of my Department. However, I would request an opportunity to review the EIR after its completion to confirm the project's scope and that in the interim no further facts or concerns will have come to light regarding the matter.

As requested, please feel free to use me as the California Highway Patrol contact for your project.

Yours truly,

S. V. BERNARD, Captain
Commander
Newhall Area
November 2, 2006

Aimee Schwimmer, AICP, Associate Planner
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Re: Project Title: Masters College Master Plan
Location: East of San Fernando Road, north of Dockweiler Drive and Deputy Jake Way, within the Placerita Canyon community
Track/Parcel Map Number: 66503

This is a response to your request for comments on the Notice of Preparation for the above referenced project, which includes fifty-four (54) detached condominium residential lots. Newhall School District does not have a developer agreement for this project, and we will not accept a simple statutory fee as mitigation for it.

In fact, we object to the approval of any new residential projects in the east Newhall vicinity. One of the elementary schools serving this area (Dr. J. Michael McGrath Elementary School) is currently near capacity. Another (Newhall Elementary) currently diverts students the Walnut/Newhall Avenue area into Wiley Canyon School. The City's desire to develop North Newhall and the potential impact of the redevelopment of downtown Newhall will eventually cause the capacity of the local elementary schools to be overburdened. Even though the current plan is for grading only this project will, when homes are constructed, add students to the enrollment area. A simple payment of fees will not mitigate the impact of this development nor will it assure adequate school housing for children from these homes.

The cumulative effect of this project and others being contemplated in the immediate vicinity will eventually have a negative effect on local elementary schools.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Marc Winger, Ed.D.
Superintendent

cc: Newhall School District Members of the Governing Board
Ms. Aimee Schwimmer, AICP
Associate Planner
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

Master's College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map No. 066503
(Master Case No. 04-496, General Plan Amendment No. 04-009, Zone Change No. 04-006,
Tentative Tract Map No. 04-009, Hillside Review No. 04-010, Oak Tree Report No. 04-050)

The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County (Districts) received a Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the subject project on October 31, 2006. We offer the following comments regarding sewerage service:

1. The proposed project area is outside the jurisdictional boundaries of the Santa Clarita Valley Sanitation District (SCVSD). Annexation of the area proposed to be developed with 54 single family homes is currently being processed (#A-32-280). For specific information on the progress of this annexation, please contact Ms. Margarita Cabrera at extension 2708.

2. Because of the project's location, the flow originating from the proposed project would have to be transported to the Districts' trunk sewer by local sewer(s) that are not maintained by the Districts. If no local sewer lines currently exist, it is the responsibility of the developer to convey any wastewater generated by the project to the nearest local sewer and/or Districts' trunk sewer. The Districts' trunk sewer that will most likely serve the proposed project is the San Fernando Road Trunk Sewer, located in a right of way on the east side of San Fernando Road south of Via Princessa. This 18-inch diameter trunk sewer has a design capacity of 4.3 million gallons per day (mgd) and conveyed a peak flow of 0.3 mgd when last measured in 2003.

3. The District operates two water reclamation plants (WRPs), the Saugus WRP and the Valencia WRP, which provide wastewater treatment in the Santa Clarita Valley. These facilities are interconnected to form a regional treatment system known as the Santa Clarita Valley Joint Sewerage System (SCVJSS). The SCVJSS has a design capacity of 28.1 mgd and currently processes an average flow of 21.1 mgd.

4. A copy of the Districts' average wastewater generation factors is enclosed to allow you to estimate the volume of wastewater the project will generate.
5. The Districts are empowered by the California Health and Safety Code to charge a fee for the privilege of connecting (directly or indirectly) to the Districts' Sewerage System or increasing the existing strength and/or quantity of wastewater attributable to a particular parcel or operation already connected. This connection fee is required to construct an incremental expansion of the Sewerage System to accommodate the proposed project, which will mitigate the impact of this project on the present Sewerage System. Payment of a connection fee will be required before a permit to connect to the sewer is issued. A copy of the Connection Fee Information Sheet is enclosed for your convenience. For more specific information regarding the connection fee application procedure and fees, please contact the Connection Fee Counter at extension 2727.

6. In order for the Districts to conform to the requirements of the Federal Clean Air Act (CAA), the design capacities of the Districts' wastewater treatment facilities are based on the regional growth forecast adopted by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). Specific policies included in the development of the SCAG regional growth forecast are incorporated into clean air plans, which are prepared by the South Coast and Antelope Valley Air Quality Management Districts in order to improve air quality in the South Coast and Mojave Desert Air Basins as mandated by the CAA. All expansions of Districts' facilities must be sized and service phased in a manner that will be consistent with the SCAG regional growth forecast for the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, Riverside, Ventura, and Imperial. The available capacity of the Districts' treatment facilities will, therefore, be limited to levels associated with the approved growth identified by SCAG. As such, this letter does not constitute a guarantee of wastewater service, but is to advise you that the Districts intend to provide this service up to the levels that are legally permitted and to inform you of the currently existing capacity and any proposed expansion of the Districts' facilities.

If you have any questions, please contact the undersigned at (562) 908-4288, extension 2717.

Very truly yours,

James F. Stahl

[Signature]

Ruth I. Frazen
Engineering Technician
Facilities Planning Department

RIF:rf

Enclosures

cc: M. Cabrera
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</table>
INFORMATION SHEET FOR APPLICANTS
PROPOSING TO CONNECT OR INCREASE THEIR DISCHARGE TO
THE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY SEWERAGE SYSTEM

THE PROGRAM

The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County are empowered by the California Health and Safety Code to charge a fee for the privilege of connecting to a Sanitation District’s sewerage system. Your connection to a City or County sewer constitutes a connection to a Sanitation District’s sewerage system as these sewers flow into a Sanitation District’s system. The County Sanitation Districts of Los Angeles County provide for the conveyance, treatment, and disposal of your wastewater. **PAYMENT OF A CONNECTION FEE TO THE COUNTY SANITATION DISTRICTS OF LOS ANGELES COUNTY WILL BE REQUIRED BEFORE A CITY OR THE COUNTY WILL ISSUE YOU A PERMIT TO CONNECT TO THE SEWER.**

I. **WHO IS REQUIRED TO PAY A CONNECTION FEE?**

1. Anyone connecting to the sewerage system for the first time for any structure located on a parcel(s) of land within a County Sanitation District of Los Angeles County.

2. Anyone increasing the quantity of wastewater discharged due to the construction of additional dwelling units on or a change in land usage of a parcel already connected to the sewerage system.

3. Anyone increasing the improvement square footage of a commercial or institutional parcel by more than 25 percent.

4. Anyone increasing the quantity and/or strength of wastewater from an industrial parcel.

5. If you qualify for an Ad Valorem Tax or Demolition Credit, connection fee will be adjusted accordingly.

II. **HOW ARE THE CONNECTION FEES USED?**

The connection fees are used to provide additional conveyance, treatment, and disposal facilities (capital facilities) which are made necessary by new users connecting to a Sanitation District’s sewerage system or by existing users who significantly increase the quantity or strength of their wastewater discharge. The Connection Fee Program insures that all users pay their fair share for any necessary expansion of the system.

III. **HOW MUCH IS MY CONNECTION FEE?**

Your connection fee can be determined from the Connection Fee Schedule specific to the Sanitation District in which your parcel(s) to be connected is located. A Sanitation District boundary map is attached to each corresponding Sanitation District Connection Fee Schedule. Your City or County sewer permitting office has copies of the Connection Fee Schedule(s) and Sanitation District boundary map(s) for your parcel(s). If you require verification of the Sanitation District in which your parcel is located, please call the Sanitation Districts’ information number listed under Item IX below.

IV. **WHAT FORMS ARE REQUIRED***?

The Connection Fee application package consists of the following:

1. Information Sheet for Applicants (this form)

2. Application for Sewer Connection

(Revised 5/31/06)
November 8, 2006

Aimee Schwimmer, Associate Planner
Planning Department
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 302
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Re: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Master's College Master Plan

Dear Ms. Schimmer:

The Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) has reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and would like to submit the following comments for consideration in the preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR). The proposed project is a Master Plan, General Plan Amendment, Zone Change, Tentative Tract Map, Hillside Review, Ridgeline Alteration Permit and Oak Tree Permit for the future development of the Master's College campus. The project site is within the CLWA's wholesale service area and retail water service would be provided by the Newhall County Water District.

Section VIII of the Initial Study of the NOP concludes in the answer to question “b” that the project would have "no impact" on groundwater supplies or on groundwater recharge that might affect nearby well production. There is no supporting evidence for this conclusion given in the discussion portion of the Initial Study. In the absence of substantial evidence that there would be "no impact", it would be appropriate to discuss the potential impacts in the Draft EIR.

The Draft EIR should include a discussion of the obligation to pay facility capacity fees to the CLWA for any component of the proposed project that requires a connection to a potable water system. The fees will be used to offset the cost of wholesale water supply infrastructure and the acquisition of water supply and are, therefore, important background information for the water utilities impact analysis section of the Draft EIR.

On November 9, 2005, the CLWA Board of Directors and the Board of Directors of the Newhall County Water District adopted the 2005 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP). Consistent with the requirements of the California Urban Water Management Planning Act, the UWMP was prepared to:

1. Accomplish water supply planning over a 25-year period in five year increments.
2. Identify and quantify adequate water supplies for existing and future demands, in normal, dry, and drought years.

3. Implement conservation and efficient use of urban water supplies.

The UWMP represents the most current information with regard to future water supplies within the CLWA's service area and demonstrates that the Santa Clarita Valley would have adequate water supplies through the year 2030. One of the assumptions in the UWMP was that potable water demand would be reduced from both existing and future users by no less than ten percent. Therefore, it is critical if the project is to avoid significant cumulative impacts to water supply that it incorporates water conservation measures into the project design. To ensure this occurs, the Master Plan, the General Plan Amendment and all other entitlements should include water conservation measures as conditions of approval.

In particular, all manufactured slopes/newly landscaped areas should include all appropriate Irrigation Best Management Practices as recommended by the Irrigation Association, Water Management Committee (http://www.irc.org/pdf/I_BMP_APRIL_2005.pdf). These measures can include, but are not limited to:

- Landscaped common areas shall be equipped with an Automatic Weather Based Irrigation Controller that will control the run times based on evapotranspiration for the time of year it is watering and be equipped with a rain sensing automatic shutoff; and,

- All irrigated landscaped areas in residential lots shall have irrigation controllers with a rain sensing automatic shutoff.

CLWA appreciates your consideration of these comments and would like to receive a copy of the Draft EIR.

If you have any questions or comments, please call Jeff Ford, Water Resources Planner, or me at (661) 297-1600.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Dan Masnada
General Manager

cc: Steve Cole, Newhall County Water District
    Tom Hawes, Castaic Lake Water Agency
November 14, 2006

Aimee Schwimmer, Associate Planner
Planning Department
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Blvd., Suite 301
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

RE: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Master’s College Master Plan

Dear Ms. Schimmer:

Thank you for the opportunity to prepare comments for consideration in the preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) for the Master’s College Master Plan. Newhall County Water District (NCWD) has reviewed the Notice of Preparation (NOP) and is submitting the following comments for consideration. The project site is within the NCWD Sphere of Influence and will require formal annexation approval from Los Angeles County LAFCO prior to NCWD providing service.

The Draft EIR should include a discussion of the infrastructure requirements necessary for NCWD to serve the project. Specifically, major grading in and around NCWD’s existing reservoir facilities adjacent to the Dockweiler Drive extension should be addressed. Other improvements may include but are not limited to pipeline extensions, pump station upgrades, reservoir pad grading, and reservoir construction.

NCWD requires that the project comply with the District’s Best Management Practices regarding water conservation. This program identifies water saving techniques, methods, landscape designs and internal water use practices that will achieve NCWD’s goals described in the Santa Clarita Valley 2005 Urban Water Management Plan.

The District appreciates your consideration of these comments and if you need any further clarification or discussion please contact Steve Cole, General Manager at (661) 259-3610.

Very truly yours,

NEWHALL COUNTY WATER DISTRICT

[Signature]

Stephen L. Cole
General Manager

Cc: Dan Masnada, Castaic Lake Water Agency
November 14, 2006

Aimee Schwimmer, AICP, Associate Planner  
City of Santa Clarita  
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300  
Santa Clarita, CA 91355  

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) for the Master’s College Master Plan project. This letter conveys recommendations from the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) concerning issues that are germane to our agency’s statutory responsibilities in relation to the proposed project.

A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), with highway, freeway, and transit components, is required under the State of California Congestion Management Program (CMP) statute. The CMP TIA Guidelines are published in the “2004 Congestion Management Program for Los Angeles County”, Appendix D. The geographic area examined in the TIA must include the following, at a minimum:

1. All CMP arterial monitoring intersections, including monitored freeway on/off-ramp intersections, where the proposed project will add 50 or more trips during either the a.m. or p.m. weekday peak hour (of adjacent street traffic); and
2. Mainline freeway-monitoring locations where the project will add 150 or more trips, in either direction, during either the a.m. or p.m. weekday peak hour.

Among the required steps for the analysis of development-related impacts to transit are:

3. Evidence that in addition to Metro, all affected Municipal transit operators received the NOP for the Draft EIR;
4. A summary of the existing transit services in the area;
5. Estimated project trip generation and mode assignment for both morning and evening peak periods;
6. Documentation on the assumptions/analyses used to determine the number and percentage of trips assigned to transit;
7. Information on facilities and/or programs that will be incorporated into the development plan that will encourage public transit usage and transportation demand management (TDM) policies and programs; and
8. An analysis of the expected project impacts on current and future transit services along with proposed project mitigation.

Metro looks forward to reviewing the Draft EIR. If you have any questions regarding this response, please call me at 213-922-6908 or by email at chapmans@metro.net. Please send the Draft EIR to the following address:

Metro CEQA Review Coordination
One Gateway Plaza MS 99-23-2
Los Angeles, CA 90012-2952
Attn: Susan Chapman

Sincerely,

Susan Chapman
Program Manager, Long Range Planning
November 17, 2006

Ms. Aimee Schwimmer
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for
Master's College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503
SCH # 2006101171, Los Angeles County

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

The Department of Fish and Game (Department) has reviewed the above-referenced Notice of Preparation (NOP), relative to impacts to biological resources. The proposed project consists of implementation of a master plan for the Master's College, associated land use designation amendments and tentative tract map for the creation of lots for 54 detached condominium residential units. The project is located at 21726 Placerita Canyon Road, City of Santa Clarita.

To enable Department staff to adequately review and comment on the proposed project we recommend the following information, where applicable, be included in the Draft Environmental Impact Report:

1. A complete, recent assessment of flora and fauna within and adjacent to the project area, with particular emphasis upon identifying endangered, threatened, and locally unique species and sensitive habitats.

   a. A thorough recent assessment of rare plants and rare natural communities, following the Department's Guidelines for Assessing Impacts to Rare Plants and Rare Natural Communities.

   b. A complete, recent assessment of sensitive fish, wildlife, reptile, and amphibian species. Seasonal variations in use of the project area should also be addressed. Recent, focused, species-specific surveys, conducted at the appropriate time of year and time of day when the sensitive species are active or otherwise identifiable, are required. Acceptable species-specific survey procedures should be developed in consultation with the Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

   c. Rare, threatened, and endangered species to be addressed should include all those which meet the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) definition (see CEQA
d. The Department's Wildlife Habitat Data Analysis Branch in Sacramento should be contacted at (916) 322-2493 to obtain current information on any previously reported sensitive species and habitats, including Significant Natural Areas identified under Chapter 12 of the Fish and Game Code. Also, any Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) or Environmentally Sensitive Habitats (ESHs) or any areas that are considered sensitive by the local jurisdiction that are located in or adjacent to the project area must be addressed.

2. A thorough discussion of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts expected to adversely affect biological resources, with specific measures to offset such impacts. This discussion should focus on maximizing avoidance, and minimizing impacts.

a. CEQA Guidelines, Section 15125(a), direct that knowledge of the regional setting is critical to an assessment of environmental impacts and that special emphasis should be placed on resources that are rare or unique to the region.

b. Project impacts should also be analyzed relative to their effects on off-site habitats and populations. Specifically, this should include nearby public lands, open space, adjacent natural habitats, and riparian ecosystems. Impacts to and maintenance of wildlife corridor/movement areas, including access to undisturbed habitat in adjacent areas, should be fully evaluated and provided. The analysis should also include a discussion of the potential for impacts resulting from such effects as increased vehicle traffic and outdoor artificial lighting.

c. A cumulative effects analysis should be developed as described under CEQA Guidelines, Section 15130. General and specific plans, as well as past, present, and anticipated future projects, should be analyzed relative to their impacts on similar plant communities and wildlife habitats.

d. Impacts to migratory wildlife affected by the project should be fully evaluated including proposals to removal/disturb native and ornamental landscaping and other nesting habitat for native birds. Impact evaluation may also include such elements as migratory butterfly roost sites and neo-tropical bird and waterfowl stop-over and staging sites. All migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (50 C.F.R. Section 10.13). Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit take of birds and their active nests, including raptors and other migratory nongame birds as listed under the MBTA.

e. Impacts to all habitats from City or County required Fuel Modification Zones (FMZ). Areas slated as mitigation for loss of habitat shall not occur within the FMZ.

f. Proposed project activities (including disturbances to vegetation) should take place outside of the breeding bird season (February 1- September 1) to avoid take (including disturbances which would cause abandonment of active nests containing eggs and/or young). If project activities cannot avoid the breeding bird season, nest surveys should be conducted and active nests should be avoided and provided with a minimum buffer as determined by a biological monitor (the Department recommends a minimum 500-foot buffer for all active raptor nests).
3. A range of alternatives should be analyzed to ensure that alternatives to the proposed project are fully considered and evaluated. A range of alternatives which avoid or otherwise minimize impacts to sensitive biological resources including wetlands/riparian habitats, alluvial scrub, coastal sage scrub, Joshua tree woodlands, etc. should be included. Specific alternative locations should also be evaluated in areas with lower resource sensitivity where appropriate.

   a. Mitigation measures for project impacts to sensitive plants, animals, and habitats should emphasize evaluation and selection of alternatives which avoid or otherwise minimize project impacts. Compensation for unavoidable impacts through acquisition and protection of high quality habitat elsewhere should be addressed with offsite mitigation locations clearly identified.

   b. The Department considers Rare Natural Communities as threatened habitats having both regional and local significance. Thus, these communities should be fully avoided and otherwise protected from project-related impacts.

   c. The Department generally does not support the use of relocation, salvage, and/or transplantation as mitigation for impacts to rare, threatened, or endangered species. Department studies have shown that these efforts are experimental in nature and largely unsuccessful.

4. A California Endangered Species Act (CESA) Permit must be obtained, if the project has the potential to result in “take” of species of plants or animals listed under CESA, either during construction or over the life of the project. CESA Permits are issued to conserve, protect, enhance, and restore State-listed threatened or endangered species and their habitats. Early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the proposed project and mitigation measures may be required in order to obtain a CESA Permit. Revisions to the Fish and Game Code, effective January 1998, require that the Department issue a separate CEQA document for the issuance of a CESA permit unless the project CEQA document addresses all project impacts to listed species and specifies a mitigation monitoring and reporting program that will meet the requirements of a CESA permit. For these reasons, the following information is requested:

   a. Biological mitigation monitoring and reporting proposals should be of sufficient detail and resolution to satisfy the requirements for a CESA Permit.

   b. A Department-approved Mitigation Agreement and Mitigation Plan are required for plants listed as rare under the Native Plant Protection Act.

5. The Department opposes the elimination of watercourses (including concrete channels) and/or the canalization of natural and manmade drainages or conversion to subsurface drains. All wetlands and watercourses, whether intermittent, ephemeral, or perennial, must be retained and provided with substantial setbacks which preserve the riparian and aquatic habitat values and maintain their value to on-site and off-site wildlife populations. The Department recommends a minimum natural buffer of 100 feet from the outside edge of the riparian zone on each side of a drainage.

   a. The Department requires a Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA), pursuant to Section 1600 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code, with the applicant prior to any direct or indirect impact to a lake or stream bed, bank or channel or associated riparian
resources. The Department's issuance of a SAA may be a project that is subject to CEQA. To facilitate our issuance of the Agreement when CEQA applies, the Department as a responsible agency under CEQA may consider the local jurisdiction's (lead agency) document for the project. To minimize additional requirements by the Department under CEQA the document should fully identify the potential impacts to the lake, stream or riparian resources and provide adequate avoidance, mitigation, monitoring and reporting commitments for issuance of the Agreement. Early consultation is recommended, since modification of the proposed project may be required to avoid or reduce impacts to fish and wildlife resources.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment. Please contact Mr. Scott Harris, Wildlife Biologist, at (626) 797-3170 if you should have any questions and for further coordination on the proposed project.

Sincerely,

Morgan Wehtje
Environmental Scientist IV

Attachments

cc: Ms. Morgan Wehtje, Camarillo
    Mr. Scott Harris, Pasadena
    Ms. Betty Courtney, Newhall
    HCP-Chron
    Department of Fish and Game
    State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

SPH:sph

Masters College Master Plan/2006 NOP
November 20, 2006

Aimee Schwimmer
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

Re: SCH# 2006101171; Master’s College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) has jurisdiction over the safety of highway-rail crossings (crossings) in California. The California Public Utilities Code requires Commission approval for the construction or alteration of crossings and grants the Commission exclusive power on the design, alteration, and closure of crossings.

The Commission is in receipt a copy of the Notice of Preparation from the State Clearinghouse. Commission staff is concerned that the project on Placerita Canyon Road will cause an increase in congestion at the nearby highway-rail grade crossing on 13th Street (DOT 746016J, lat=34.3848697337, lon=-118.531062951). The City of Santa Clarita should arrange a meeting with the Commission’s Rail Crossings Engineering Section and Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) to discuss relevant safety issues and, if necessary, file a GO88-B request for authority to modify an at-grade crossing.

If you have any questions, please contact Varouj Jinbachian, Senior Utilities Engineer at 213-576-7081, vsj@cpuc.ca.gov, or me at rxm@cpuc.ca.gov, 213-576-7078.

Sincerely,

Rosa Muñoz, PE
Utilities Engineer
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Consumer Protection & Safety Division

C: Laurene Lopez, SCRRRA
Rob Harris, SCRRRA
November 21, 2006

Aimee Schwimmer
Associate Planner
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Blvd., Suite 300
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

RE: Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRRA) Comments on the Notice of Preparation (NOP) of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the Master’s College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

SCRRRA received a copy of this document and thanks you for providing us the opportunity to comment. As background information, SCRRRA is a five-county Joint Powers Authority (JPA) that operates the regional commuter rail system known as Metrolink on member agency-owned and private freight railroad rights of way. Additionally, SCRRRA provides a range of rail engineering, construction, operations and maintenance services to its five JPA member agencies. The JPA member agencies are the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) – previously referred to as MTA, Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA), San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG), Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and Ventura County Transportation Commission (VCTC).

The railroad right of way that runs near the proposed development is owned by Metro and operated and maintained by SCRRRA. Based on the proximity of the rail line to the proposed development, this letter conveys recommendations from the SCRRRA concerning issues that are germane to our agency’s statutory responsibilities in relation to the proposed project.

1. As part of your land use element, please consider the increased traffic flow into your entrance off of San Fernando Road, to the west of the project area. As stated in your NOP, the entrance to the community on San Fernando Road is also used as the main entrance to the college. The proposed development will increase the vehicle traffic levels at the existing 13th Street/San Fernando Road grade crossing. SCRRRA recommends a grade separation of this crossing, especially considering the cumulative traffic increases, which will be associated with this and other adjacent developments, like the North Newhall Specific Plan.
2. Since the property is being proposed for traffic increasing uses, such as residential, commercial, and university facilities, pedestrian friendly and transit compatible designs should be outlined throughout the area.

3. The city should consider all potential benefits resulting from the Metrolink commuter rail station and plan to capture those benefits in order to reduce vehicular trips.

4. Existing or proposed traffic signals within close proximity of the railroad must be interconnected with the railroad signal controls. This will allow for proper preempted to allow vehicular traffic to clear track area prior to arrival of trains. Close coordination with the City and railroad is critical to allow for safe movements of vehicles.

Once again, thank you for allowing SCARRA’s input on this NOP/DEIR. We request to receive timely notice, in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21092.5 and State CEQA Guideline Section 15088, of the written proposed responses to our comments on this environmental document and the time and place of any scheduled public meetings or public hearings by the agency decision makers at least 10 days prior to such a meeting.

If you have any questions regarding these comments please contact Laurene Lopez, Community Relations Administrator, at (213) 452-0288 or by e-mail at lpezl@scrra.net.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

David Solow
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Patricia Chen, Metro
    Susan Chapman, Metro
    Freddy Cheung, UPRR
    Rosa Munoz, CPUC
    SCRRRA Files
November 29, 2006

Ms. Aimee Schwimmer, AICP
Associate Planner
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

RE: SCAG Clearinghouse No. 1 20060728 Master's College Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

Thank you for submitting the Master’s College Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503 for review and comment. As areawide clearinghouse for regionally significant projects, SCAG reviews the consistency of local plans, projects and programs with regional plans. This activity is based on SCAG’s responsibilities as a regional planning organization pursuant to state and federal laws and regulations. Guidance provided by these reviews is intended to assist local agencies and project sponsors to take actions that contribute to the attainment of regional goals and policies.

We have reviewed the Master’s College Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503, and have determined that the proposed Project is not regionally significant per SCAG Intergovernmental Review (IGR) Criteria and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Section 15260). Therefore, the proposed Project does not warrant comments at this time. Should there be a change in the scope of the proposed Project, we would appreciate the opportunity to review and comment at that time.

A description of the proposed Project will be published in SCAG’s November 1-30, 2006 Intergovernmental Review Clearinghouse Report for public review and comment.

The project title and SCAG Clearinghouse number should be used in all correspondence with SCAG concerning this Project. Correspondence should be sent to the attention of the Clearinghouse Coordinator. If you have any questions, please contact me at (213) 236-1856. Thank you.

Sincerely,

SYLVIA PATSAOURAS
Manager, Environmental Division

SYLVIA PATSAOURAS
Manager, Environmental Division

RECEIVED PLANNING DIVISION
DECEMBER 5, 2006
CITY OF SANTA CLARITA
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O BOX 532711
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90053-2325

January 10, 2007

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:
Office of the Chief
Regulatory Branch

City of Santa Clarita
Attention: Aimee Schwimmer
23920 Valencia Boulevard, Suite 300
Santa Clarita, California 91355

Dear Ms. Schwimmer:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project for the Master's College Master Plan and Tentative Tract Map 66503 in Placerita Canyon in the City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County, California. Based on a preliminary review of the information submitted, we have determined that the proposed project may require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit.

A Corps of Engineers permit is required for the discharge of dredged or fill material into, including any redeposit of dredged material within, "waters of the United States" and adjacent wetlands pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972. Specifically, the grading associated with the project may entail discharge of fill into the Placerita Creek, a water of the United States.

If you or the project proponents have any questions, please contact Valisa E. Nez at (213) 452-3419. Please refer to this letter and 2007-25-VEN in your reply.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Cohen
Senior Project Manager, North Coast Section
Regulatory Branch

Enclosures