

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EIR

In compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), this report describes the environmental consequences of the proposed Crystal Springs Uplands School (project) located in the City of Belmont. This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) is designed to inform City of Belmont decision-makers, responsible agencies and the general public of the proposed project and the potential physical consequences of project approval. This Draft EIR also examines alternatives to the proposed project and recommends mitigation measures to reduce or avoid potentially significant physical impacts.

The City of Belmont is the Lead Agency for environmental review of the proposed project. This EIR will be used by the City of Belmont and the public in their review of the proposed project and associated approvals described in Section 3, Project Description.

1.2 PROPOSED PROJECT

Crystal Springs Uplands School (CSUS) is proposing to build a new private middle school on a 6.46-acre site at 6-8 and 10 Davis Drive in the City of Belmont. The project site is located on the edge of an open space canyon area and composed of two separate parcels currently developed with approximately 84,500 square feet of commercial/office and warehouse buildings, a parking lot for approximately 165 vehicles, and perimeter landscaping. The two existing buildings would be demolished and approximately 84,500 square feet of paved parking and hardscape area would be removed. The proposed project includes an Academic Center, a Multi-Purpose Building, a Gymnasium, a Storage Building, landscaping, and site improvements as part of Phase 1. New building construction would total approximately 60,000 square feet. In the future (Phase 2), CSUS intends to add a fully enclosed swimming pool building to the sports zone (west of the parking facility and north of the gymnasium location). The school would serve up to 240 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students and employ up to 40 faculty and staff.

1.3 CEQA PROCESS AND PUBLIC OUTREACH

1.3.1 Notice of Preparation

The City of Belmont circulated a Notice of Preparation (NOP) notifying responsible agencies that an EIR would be prepared for the project. The NOP also indicated the environmental topics anticipated to be addressed in this Draft EIR. The NOP was received by the State Clearinghouse on September 16, 2014. In addition, the NOP was mailed to local and regional public agencies and organizations that have requested notification regarding the project or that are likely to be interested in the potential impacts of the project.

Comments on the NOP were received by the City and considered during preparation of the Draft EIR. A copy of the NOP and the comment letters received are included in Appendix A of this Draft EIR.

1.3.2 Draft EIR Public Review

The City of Belmont is making this document available to local, state, and federal agencies and to interested organizations and individuals that may wish to review the Draft EIR and submit comments. Publication of this Draft EIR marks the beginning of a 45-day public review period, starting July 16, 2015 to August 31, 2015, during which individuals and agencies may direct written comments to the following address:

Damon DiDonato, Senior Planner
Community Development Department
City of Belmont
One Twin Pines Lane
Belmont, CA 94402
or by email to: ddidonato@belmont.gov.

Copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the following public locations:

Community Development Department Office
One Twin Pines Lane
Belmont, CA 94402

The Draft EIR is also posted on the City of Belmont's website via the Major Projects page: <http://www.belmont.gov/>

Public hearings on the Draft EIR to accept written or oral comments are scheduled as follows:

- August 18, 2015 City of Belmont Planning Commission

The hearing is scheduled to begin at 7:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers of Belmont, City Hall, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA, 94402.

1.3.3 Comments and Responses Document and Final EIR

All written comments received within the public review period and all oral comments received at public hearings on the Draft EIR will be addressed by the City in a Comments and Responses document, which will be released for public review. The Draft EIR and the Comments and Responses document will together constitute the Final EIR. Following circulation of the Final EIR, the Planning Commission will make a recommendation on EIR certification (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15090) during a public hearing. Once the Planning Commission has completed its review and recommendation, the EIR will be forwarded to the City Council for Certification. If the City Council certifies the EIR, it would then consider approval of the project.

CEQA requires the adoption of findings prior to approval of a project where a certified EIR identifies significant environmental effects (CEQA Guidelines, Sections 15091 and 15092). If the City approves the project, but the EIR identifies significant impacts that cannot be mitigated, the City must prepare a Statement of Overriding Considerations (CEQA Guidelines, Section 15093[b]).

1.3.4 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting

At the time of project approval, CEQA requires lead agencies to “adopt a reporting and mitigation monitoring program for the changes to the project which it has adopted or made a

condition of project approval in order to mitigate or avoid significant effects on the environment” (CEQA Section 21081.6; *CEQA Guidelines* Section 15097). This Draft EIR identifies and presents mitigation measures that would form the basis of such a monitoring program. Any measures adopted by the City as conditions for approval of the project will be included in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program to ensure compliance.

1.4 EIR SCOPE

This Draft EIR is a project-level EIR. All CEQA Guidelines Appendix G topics are discussed in the Draft EIR; however, based on the initial site analyses, the following environmental topics are addressed as separate sections in this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Land Use and Planning Policy
- Noise
- Transportation and Circulation

1.5 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The purpose of this document is to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the Crystal Springs Uplands School Project. This document is organized to provide the public and agencies with clear, direct information on the potential environmental impacts resulting from the project. This Draft EIR is organized into the following sections:

- *Section 1 – Introduction:* Discusses the overall Draft EIR purpose, provides a summary of the proposed project and the Draft EIR scope, and summarizes the organization of the Draft EIR.
- *Section 2 – Summary:* Provides a summary of the proposed project and the impacts that would result from project implementation, and describes mitigation measures recommended to reduce or avoid significant impacts. A discussion of alternatives to the proposed project is also provided.
- *Section 3 – Project Description:* Provides a description of the project history, project site, project details, project objectives, and required permits and approvals.
- *Section 4 – Setting, Impacts and Mitigation Measures:* Describes the following for each environmental technical topic: existing conditions (setting); potential environmental impacts and their level of significance; and measures to mitigate identified impacts. Potential adverse impacts are identified by levels of significance, as follows: less than significant impact (LTS), significant impact (S), and significant and unavoidable impact (SU). The significance of each impact (after mitigation) is categorized before and after implementation of any recommended mitigation measure(s).

- *Section 5– Alternatives:* Provides an evaluation of the alternatives to the proposed project in addition to the No Project alternative.
- *Section 6 – CEQA Required Conclusions:* Provides additional specifically-required analyses of the proposed project’s cumulative impacts, growth-inducing effects, and significant irreversible changes.
- *Section 7 – Report Preparation:* Identifies EIR preparers, references used and persons and organizations contacted.