

# 1 Introduction

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On July 14, 2021, the University of California, Riverside (UCR) released for public review the draft environmental impact report (Draft EIR) for the proposed 2021 Long Range Development Plan (2021 LRDP). The Draft EIR was prepared under the direction of the University of California Board of Regents (Regents) in accordance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Sections 21000–21177) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387). The Regents is serving as the lead agency under CEQA for consideration of certification of the EIR and has principal responsibility for deciding whether to approve the 2021 LRDP.

## 1.1 Public Review and Responses to Comments

In accordance with Sections 15087 and 15105 of the CEQA Guidelines, the Draft EIR was circulated for public review and comment to Responsible Agencies, interested parties, as well as members of the public, for 51 days (July 14, 2021 through September 3, 2021) (beyond the normal 45-day review period that is required under CEQA). UCR also held a public hearing via Zoom on August 4, 2021 from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m., to receive comments on the Draft EIR. Comment letters received on the Draft EIR and an oral testimony provided at the public hearing are provided in their entirety in Chapter 2, *Responses to Comments*. Furthermore, at the request of Councilwoman Clarissa Cervantes during the public hearing, a 2021 LRDP presentation was provided during the Residents of Eastside Active in Leadership community meeting via Zoom on August 27, 2021.

Responses to each of the comments received are provided in Chapter 2, *Responses to Comments* of this document as part of the final environmental impact report (Final EIR). Although some of the comments have resulted in changes to the text of the Draft EIR (see Chapter 4, *Revisions to the Draft EIR*), none of the changes constitute “significant new information,” which would require recirculation of the Draft EIR. “Significant new information” is defined in Section 15088.5(a) of the CEQA Guidelines as follows:

- (1) A new significant environmental impact would result from the project or from a new mitigation measure proposed to be implemented.
- (2) A substantial increase in the severity of an environmental impact would result unless mitigation measures are adopted that reduce the impact to a level of insignificance.
- (3) A feasible project alternative or mitigation measure considerably different from others previously analyzed would clearly lessen the environmental impacts of the project, but the project’s proponents decline to adopt it.
- (4) The Draft EIR was so fundamentally and basically inadequate and conclusory in nature that meaningful public review and comment were precluded.

None of these circumstances has arisen from comments on the Draft EIR; therefore, recirculation is not required.

The Draft EIR, Final EIR, and associated appendices are available for review online at: <https://pdc.ucr.edu/environmental-planning-ceqa> and at the UCR Planning, Design & Construction office located at 1223 University Avenue Suite 240 Riverside, California 92507.

As required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15088(b), at least 10 days before consideration of the Final EIR for certification, UCR provided a written response (electronic copy) to each public agency that submitted written comments on the Draft EIR.

## 1.2 Organization of the Responses to Comments

CEQA requires a lead agency that has prepared a Draft EIR to consult with and obtain comments from responsible and trustee agencies that have jurisdiction by law with respect to the project, and to provide the public with an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR (CEQA Guidelines Sections 15086 and 15087).

Sections 15088(a) and (c) of the CEQA Guidelines also require a lead agency to evaluate comments on environmental issues received from persons who reviewed the Draft EIR and to prepare written responses to comments raising significant environmental issues. The Final EIR is the mechanism for responding to these comments. Responses are not required for comments regarding merits of the proposed project or regarding issues not related to the project's environmental impacts. Several of the comments on the Draft EIR state the commenter's preferences regarding the modification or approval of the 2021 LRDP, or provide general statements concerning the content of the Draft EIR. Detailed responses are not warranted or required by CEQA for comments that do not address the environmental issues related to the proposed 2021 LRDP. Such instances are noted in the responses. The Regents will review all comments received, including those that do not warrant a response under CEQA, before considering certification of the Final EIR or approval of the proposed 2021 LRDP.

Each comment has been reproduced with individual comments bracketed and numbered according to the type of commenter (Federal/Tribal, State agency, local/regional agency, organization, individual, commenter at public hearing) with responses following each comment. In some instances, clarifications of the text of the Draft EIR may be required. In those cases, the text of the Draft EIR is revised and the changes compiled in Chapter 4, *Revisions to the Draft EIR*. The text deletions are shown with ~~strikeout~~ (strikeout), and additions are shown with underline (underline).

## 1.3 Project Decision Process

This document and the Draft EIR, as amended through responses to comments, together constitute the Final EIR, which will be considered by the Regents prior to a decision on whether to approve the project. If the Regents decide to approve the project, the Regents, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15090, must first certify that the Final EIR was completed in compliance with CEQA's requirements, was reviewed and considered by the Regents and UCR, and reflects their independent judgment and analysis. The Regents would then be required to adopt findings of fact on the disposition of each significant environmental impact, as required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15091. If significant and unavoidable impacts (those that cannot be mitigated to less than significant) would result from implementing the 2021 LRDP and the Regents chooses to approve the 2021 LRDP, the Regents would need to adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations, under CEQA Guidelines Section 15093, explaining reasons the Regents believe the proposed 2021 LRDP should move forward despite these environmental effects. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, which is required by CEQA Guidelines Section 15091(d), has been included as part of Chapter 3, *Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program*, of this Final EIR and will be adopted by the Regents in conjunction with any project approval.