

California State University, Fresno
Campus Pointe Project

Statement of Overriding Considerations

(Pursuant to Sections 21081 and 21081.6 of the Public
Resources Code
and Sections 15091 and 15093 of the CEQA Guidelines)

Revised Environmental Impact Report – November 2011
(State Clearinghouse Number 2005121164)

STATEMENT OF OVERRIDING CONSIDERATIONS

CEQA requires the decision-making agency to balance, as applicable, the economic, legal, social, technological or other benefits of the project against its unavoidable environmental risks when determining whether to approve the project. If the specific economic, legal, social, technological or other benefits of the project outweigh the unavoidable adverse environmental effects, those effects may be considered "acceptable." (CEQA Guidelines 15093(a).) CEQA requires the agency to state, in writing, the specific reasons for considering a project acceptable when significant impacts are not avoided or substantially lessened. Those reasons must be based on substantial evidence in the Final EIR or elsewhere in the administrative record (CEQA Guidelines 15093(b).)

In accordance with the requirements of CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, the Board of Trustees finds that the mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR and the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, when implemented, will avoid or substantially lessen virtually all of the significant effects identified in the Final EIR for the California State University, Fresno Campus Pointe Project. However, certain significant impacts of the project are unavoidable even after incorporation of all feasible mitigation measures. These significant unavoidable impacts are: a) the loss of prime agricultural soils; b) impacts to air quality attributable to operational emissions from project-related traffic; and c) noise impacts associated with traffic operation. The Final EIR provides detailed information regarding these impacts.

The Board of Trustees finds that all feasible mitigation measures identified in the Final EIR within the purview of the University will be implemented with the project, and that the remaining significant unavoidable effects are outweighed and are found to be acceptable due to the following specific overriding economic, legal, social, technological, or other benefits based upon the facts set forth above, the Final EIR, and the record, as follows:

- a) The Campus Pointe Project will enable California State University, Fresno to provide enhanced educational opportunities to college students within the region. CSU campuses provide access and scholarship opportunities to an increasing number of students throughout the State, thereby significantly contributing to a well-educated work force and the economic well-being of the State of California.
- b) The project provides for future facilities supporting the educational mission of the University, providing social benefits associated with advances in various fields of study.
- c) The project supports the educational, cultural, and recreational facilities on the California State University, Fresno campus that will serve citizens of the region, including those currently under-represented in the CSU.
- d) The project will create direct job opportunities for faculty and staff, as well as additional employment in university support activities.

- e) The project will create regional economic growth and development, create jobs, attract new retail uses to the community, establish new training partnerships between the university and private industry, address the CSU's affordable housing needs, and provide a substantial increase in the tax base of the local community.
- f) The provision of affordable faculty/staff housing will assist California State University, Fresno in meeting its workforce housing needs, and will enhance the University's ability to attract well-qualified faculty and staff members, thereby enhancing California State University, Fresno's standing as a premier undergraduate, graduate and research institution in the state of California. Escalating housing prices in the Fresno region have made it extremely difficult to attract and retain quality faculty.

Most starting salaries at the University fall within the moderate-income range of the region. New faculty and staff recruitment is needed to replace retiring campus employees and to provide for expanded enrollment. Development of affordable housing is key to attracting and retaining the qualified faculty and staff necessary to provide quality public higher education for the San Joaquin Valley region.

- g) The provision of additional student housing will support a more learning-centered campus environment, thereby improving the academic experience and success rate of future students.
- h) The student and faculty/staff housing components will have a positive impact on traffic conditions by reducing the percentage of peak-hour commuters traveling to campus in private vehicles.
- i) The project includes improvements to utility infrastructure that will support and improve the overall efficiency of on-campus facilities.
- j) The project incorporates environmentally sound, sustainable planning and design concepts including: providing a mixed-use housing and retail development with enhanced walkability and transit accessibility for students and faculty, thereby improving the campus image and identity; design of future buildings utilizing larger building footprints and multiple stories in order to more efficiently utilize land resources and provide project open space; and building siting and massing that provides strategic noise attenuation.
- k) The project is strongly influenced by input from the campus and surrounding communities and incorporates measures to balance community concerns with the academic mission of the University.

Considering all factors, the Board of Trustees finds that there are specific economic, legal, social, technological and other considerations associated with the project that outweigh the project's significant unavoidable effects, and the adverse effects are therefore considered acceptable.