

## 2.1 Background

This draft environmental impact report (EIR) evaluates the potential environmental effects that could result from implementation of the proposed Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy Specific Plan (proposed project or Specific Plan) in the city of La Cañada Flintridge (LCF), California. The Specific Plan (attached as Appendix A) describes a conceptual approach, development standards, and guidelines for the construction of new facilities, the renovation of existing facilities, and implementation of infrastructure improvements on the campus of the Flintridge Sacred Heart Academy (FSHA). This draft EIR has been prepared in conformity with state environmental policy guidelines for the implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The proposed Specific Plan is intended to allow for improvements to and modernization of the campus as a whole. Under the proposed Specific Plan, the enrollment cap would increase from 385 to 425 students, inclusive of commuter and boarding students. Upon completion of Specific Plan buildout, the total building square footage of the campus would increase from its existing 217,350 square feet to a maximum of approximately 258,100 square feet, and up to 99,000 square feet for a proposed parking structure. Facilities planned under the Specific Plan would include a new Arts and Humanities Building of up to 44,200 square feet; expansion of the High School Building, increased in area from its existing 19,200 square feet to approximately 32,700 square feet; and a new multi-level parking structure, providing approximately 240 parking spaces.

## 2.2 Overview of EIR Process

As described in Section 15143 of the State CEQA Guidelines:

*The EIR shall focus on the significant effects on the environment. The significant effects should be discussed with emphasis in proportion to their severity and probability of occurrence.*

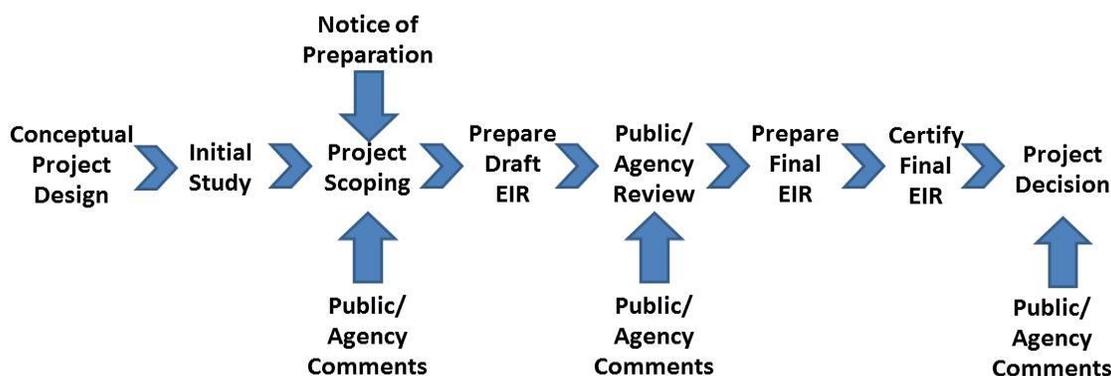
As a first step in complying with the procedural requirements of CEQA, LCF prepared a Notice of Preparation (NOP). In compliance with CEQA, LCF completed a multi-step process to determine the appropriate scope of issues to be examined in this draft EIR. LCF filed the NOP with the State Clearinghouse (SCH No. 2013011044) in the Office of Planning and Research as an indication that an EIR would be prepared. The NOP is included in Appendix B of this EIR. The NOP was distributed to involved public agencies and interested parties for a 30-day public review period, which began on January 28, 2013 and ended on February 28, 2013.

During the preparation of the EIR, agencies, organizations, and persons whom LCF believed might have an interest in this proposed project were specifically contacted. Information, data, and observations from these contacts are included in the EIR. Agencies or interested persons who did not respond during the public review period of the NOP will have an opportunity to comment during the public review period of the draft EIR, as well as at subsequent hearings on the proposed project.

This EIR has been prepared to meet all of the substantive and procedural requirements of CEQA (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.), the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15000 et seq.). LCF is the Lead Agency for this proposed project, taking primary responsibility for conducting the environmental review and approving or denying the project.

Any environmental impacts that cannot be mitigated to a less-than-significant level are considered to be significant and unavoidable. If a public agency approves a project that has significant and unavoidable impacts, the agency must state in writing the specific reasons for approving the project, based on the Final EIR and any other information in the public record for the project. This is termed a “statement of overriding considerations,” which is used to explain the specific reasons why the benefits of a proposed project outweigh its unavoidable environmental effects. The statement is prepared, if required, after the Final EIR has been completed, but before action to approve the project has been taken.

A graphic description of the EIR preparation process is provided in the following flow chart:



## 2.3 Public Outreach

### 2.3.1 Notice of Preparation

As mentioned above, the NOP was distributed to involved public agencies, interested parties, and property owners within 800 feet of the project site for a 30-day public review period, which began on January 28, 2013 and ended on February 28, 2013. The purpose of the public review period was to solicit comments on the scope and content of the environmental analysis to be included in the EIR. LCF received comments in response to the NOP, and these comments are also included in Appendix B of this EIR. As announced in the NOP, a public scoping meeting was held on February 11, 2013. Sign-in sheets, notes from the meeting, and comments are included in Appendix B.

### 2.3.2 Review of the Draft EIR

This draft EIR has been distributed to affected agencies, surrounding cities, counties, and interested parties for a 45-day review period in accordance with Section 15087 of the State CEQA Guidelines. During the 45-day review period, which commences on July 14, 2014 and ends on August 27, 2014, the draft EIR is available for general public review at the following locations:

La Cañada Flintridge Library  
4545 N. Oakwood Avenue  
La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011

City of La Cañada Flintridge  
(818) 790-8881  
1327 Foothill Boulevard  
La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011-2137

Additionally, the draft EIR can be downloaded or reviewed via the LCF Planning Division website (<http://www.lcf.ca.gov/planning>).

Any individuals or parties may provide written comments on the draft EIR. Written comments on the draft EIR must be postmarked by August 27, 2014 and should be addressed to:

Fred Buss  
City of La Canada Flintridge  
(818) 790-8881  
1327 Foothill Boulevard  
La Cañada Flintridge, CA 91011-2137

Comments may also be submitted electronically to Fred Buss at [fbuss@lcf.ca.gov](mailto:fbuss@lcf.ca.gov). Upon completion of the 45-day public review period, written responses to all comments on environmental issues discussed in the draft EIR will be prepared and incorporated into the Final EIR. These comments and their responses will be included in the Final EIR for consideration by the LCF Planning Commission and City Council, as well as other public decision makers.

## 2.4 Organization of Draft EIR

As illustrated in Table 2-1, this draft EIR is organized into eight chapters, each dealing with a separate aspect of the required content of the EIR, as described in the State CEQA Guidelines. To help the reader locate information of particular interest, a brief summary of the contents of each chapter of the EIR is provided.

The following chapters are contained within the EIR:

**Table 2-1: Required Draft EIR Contents**

Requirement/CEQA Guidelines Section	Location in Draft EIR
Table of Contents (Section 15122)	Table of Contents
Summary (Section 15123)	Chapter 1
Project Description (Section 15124)	Chapter 3
Environmental Setting (Section 15125)	Chapter 4
Significant Environmental Impacts (Section 15126.2 (a))	Chapter 4
Unavoidable Significant Environmental Impacts (Section 15126.2 (b))	Chapter 4
Mitigation Measures (Section 15126.4)	Chapter 4
Cumulative Impacts (Section 15130)	Chapter 4
Alternatives to the Proposed Project (Section 15126.6)	Chapter 5
Effects Found Not to Be Significant (Section 15128)	Chapter 6

<b>Requirement/CEQA Guidelines Section</b>	<b>Location in Draft EIR</b>
References (Section 15129)	Chapter 9
List of Preparers, Organizations, and Persons Consulted (Section 15129)	Chapters 7 and 8
Acronyms and Abbreviations	Table of Contents

**Chapter 1, Summary:** This chapter contains an overview of the scope of the EIR and a summary of the proposed project, environmental impacts, proposed mitigation, level of significance after mitigation, and unavoidable impacts.

**Chapter 2, Introduction:** This chapter provides an overview of the purpose and use for the EIR, the scope of the EIR, the environmental review process for the EIR and the proposed project, and the general format of the document.

**Chapter 3, Project Description:** This chapter defines the project location, summarizes the proposed project, and outlines the project objectives and the need for the project.

**Chapter 4, Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures:** This chapter describes and evaluates environmental issue areas, including the existing environmental setting and background, applicable environmental thresholds, environmental impacts (both short-term and long-term), policy considerations related to the particular environmental issue area under analysis, mitigation measures capable of minimizing environmental harm, and cumulative impacts. Whether the project would result in significant and unavoidable impacts is also identified for each topic area.

**Chapter 5, Comparison of Alternatives:** This chapter analyzes alternatives to the proposed project and identifies the Environmentally Superior Alternative. The three alternatives analyzed in this EIR are the No-Project Alternative, the Reduced Project Development Alternative, and the Retained Cottages Alternative.

**Chapter 6, Other Environmental Considerations:** This chapter discusses the environmental effects of the proposed project found not to be significant, provides an analysis of the proposed project's potential growth-inducing impacts, identifies any irreversible changes to the natural environment resulting from the proposed project, and includes an analysis of any significant impacts of proposed mitigation measures.

**Chapter 7, Persons Consulted:** This chapter identifies the public and private agencies and individuals contacted during preparation of this report.

**Chapter 8, List of Preparers:** This chapter identifies all individuals responsible for the preparation of this report.

**Chapter 9, References:** This chapter identifies all references used and cited in the preparation of this report.