

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: — County Clerk-Recorder
 County of Santa Clara
 70 W. Hedding Street
 1st Fl., E. Wing
 San Jose, CA 95110
 [filing pursuant to Government
 Code Section 21152(b)]

FROM:
 West Valley – Mission
 Community College District
 14000 Fruitvale Avenue
 Saratoga, CA 95070

 x State Clearinghouse
 1400 Tenth Street
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Project Title: West Valley College Learning Resource Center (LRC) - Library

Project Location: This project is situated on the West Valley College (WVC) campus in the City of Saratoga, County of Santa Clara. The campus is located at the intersection of Fruitvale and Allendale avenues (14000 Fruitvale Avenue).

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

West Valley College is in the process of renovating, replacing, and constructing proposed facilities consistent with its *Long-Range Development Plan/Master Plan* (LRDP). The LRDP was completed and approved in 2005, and has undergone review and revision as required, specifically with the *West Valley College 2020 Educational and Facilities Master Plan* (2015). A Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the LRDP was certified in September 2005. The FEIR addressed planned campus improvement projects and also acknowledged that further environmental review may be required for specific projects when more detailed plans become available. The LRDP/Master Plan includes the following goal for campus improvements:

“Interior Remodeling Projects

Interior remodeling would be required for all remaining structures on campus. Different from the more extensive efforts necessary to convert buildings to new programmatic requirements ... construction activities in this category include classroom modification, smart class construction, disabled access improvements, mechanical systems replacement, fire sprinkler replacement, lighting and power upgrades, and enhanced data and telecommunications capability. Buildings in this category include:

- Library/Television Remodel (LIB/TV/TU Building)”

Plans for improving the College’s educational facilities were further supported by the West Valley College Educational and Facilities Master Plan (2020) with the following commitment:

“B. SUPPORT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: A VIBRANT LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER

A robust and comprehensive Learning Resource Center (LRC) that seeks to enhance student learning and achievement would benefit any program, flagship or otherwise, that West Valley offers now and in the future. Both students and faculty would like to see the current Library evolve into this role, embracing the Library, tutoring, media and writing labs, and distance learning in open collaborative spaces. The facility would also provide study areas and food service. Campus users would like to see an area dedicated to technology assistance for students including learning to navigate college-required software with college staff and receiving personal device assistance from other students. A vibrant, lively, and supportive LRC would raise the appeal of West Valley to all prospective students.”

This project proposes to reconstruct West Valley College’s 47- year old Learning Resource Center (LRC) to modernize instructional space and improve service delivery. The LRC, originally constructed in 1972, encompasses 59,134 Gross Square Feet (GSF) and 48,265 Assignable Square Feet (ASF). The LRC supports various programs and services, including, the Digital Media Center, TV/Recording Studio, Writing Center, Library, Tutorial/Assessment Center, English as a Second Language (ESL), Graphics, Printing Shop, and the Disability and Educational Support Program (DESP). The LRC is functionally and physically inadequate and unable to accommodate current needs. The inefficient use of space adjacencies and antiquated technology within the building impedes West Valley College’s ability to reach instructional goals and the ability of students to study and perform research. The proposed project would alleviate problems within the current building by reconstructing the existing facility to meet programmatic needs. The reconstruction effort will improve functional space adjacencies, promote sharing of resources, and upgrade technology and building systems while not changing the overall building footprint.

Staff estimates that for the program to function appropriately and meet demand, space should be approximately 2,000 assignable square feet (ASF). Since existing rooms were never designed to incorporate modern technology, classes continue to be taught with outdated and obsolete equipment, which deprives students of the opportunity to utilize equipment commonly used in the broadcasting industry.

The proposed project would provide an effective solution to current problems by addressing the following goals:

- Improve space configuration to increase use, efficiency and integration
- Provide facilities to meet the needs of the programs and services within the LRC
- Provide a safe, secure, and comfortable environment which encourages learning
- Provide a permanent facility consistent with the College’s Education and Facilities Master Plan
- Promote a collaborative instructional environment by locating related departments / divisions within adjacent spaces.
- Provide building-wide network, technology and infrastructure to safely and adequately deliver instruction and services.
- Comply with ADA and other building code requirements
- Minimize disruption to instruction and campus operations during construction
- Provide a cost-effective solution

A goal of the District Strategic Plan is to provide modern and permanent facilities that support academic programs. The Five-Year Construction Plan and West Valley College Education and

Facilities Master Plan promote extension of the viability of existing permanent buildings on campus and program integration. With these goals in mind, the College's Facilities Master Plan calls for the renovation of the Learning Resource Center to extend the building's viability, improve program collaboration, and to improve space configurations within the building that would allow users to share resources and increase efficiency.

The proposed LRC would be used as a vehicle not only to educate the students of West Valley College, but would also be available to the entire community. As an example, the LRC's TV/Recording Studio, a growing program, operates in a television studio shared by the Saratoga Community Access Television Network and the Fine Arts division. Consequently, the West Valley College LRC renovation project would benefit: 1) the College's students, staff, and visitors; 2) the residents of the Saratoga and surrounding communities; and 3) the general public.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: West Valley – Mission
Community College District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying out Project: West Valley – Mission
Community College District

Exempt Status: (Check one)

- ☐ Ministerial (§15073, State Guidelines; §4.5, Local Guidelines)
- ☐ Declared Emergency (§15269[a], State Guidelines; §4.4[A], Local Guidelines)
- ☐ Emergency Project (§15269 [b] and [c], State Guidelines; §4.4[B] and [C], Local Guidelines)
- ☒ x Categorical or Statutory Exemption, State type and section number:

State Guidelines: §15301, Class 1: Existing Facilities
§15302, Class 2: Replacement or Reconstruction

Reasons why project is exempt: This proposed project involves the interior renovation of the existing LRC facility within the current building footprint. As a part of the process for determining the best approach to achieving the District's goals for the LRC facility, four alternatives to the proposed project were examined:

- Alternative #1 – Reconstruction of the existing LRC
- Alternative #2 – Construction of a new LRC
- Alternative #3 – Install Modular Portables
- Alternative #4 – Lease Space Off-Campus

The proposed project (Alternative #1) would reconstruct the existing LRC building. Renovation and reconstruction of the existing building meets every goal identified within the solution criteria by solving the issue of inefficient use of space and meeting programmatic needs; providing an updated technological infrastructure; providing comprehensive ADA and building code compliance; creating a safe environment for studying and research; adhering to the College's Master Plan; minimizing disruption to instruction and campus operations; and is the most cost effective solution. Additionally, the other alternatives considered for the proposed project would have potentially significant environmental impacts requiring further review under CEQA Guidelines (2019).

CEQA Guidelines §15301 – Class 1, *Existing Facilities*, consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of existing or former use. Specifically, section 15301(a) indicates exemption for interior or exterior alterations involving such things as interior partitions, plumbing, and electrical conveyances. This exemption would allow the project's planned re-allocation of internal LRC spaces, the addition of restroom facilities, and the improvement of electrical infrastructure to achieve a more efficient utilization of the existing facility space. Additionally, the proposed project would not increase the existing 59,134 gross square feet (GSF) of the LRC; assignable square feet (ASF) area within the building would decrease from 48,264 to 47,100 s.f. The proposed project does not involve the expansion of existing use and slightly reduces the assignable area for future educational purposes.

Section 15301(d) provides an exemption for the restoration or rehabilitation of deteriorated or damaged structures, facilities, or mechanical equipment to meet current standards of public health and safety. The planned project proposes the internal renovation of such facilities to meet current standards; the last notable internal improvements to the current facilities occurred in 1975.

This project is also exempt pursuant to categorical exemption per CEQA Guidelines §15302 – Class 2, *Replacement or Reconstruction*, which identifies exemptions for replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. The internal renovations envisioned for this project would serve the same purpose as existing facility uses, but updated to current and future standards for an improved educational experience.

As a result of the proposed renovation and reconstruction of the existing LRC facilities, the proposed project would enhance the quality of educational facilities on the campus and improve the educational opportunities at West Valley College for College students and faculty, K – 12 grade students and teachers in the community, and the community of Saratoga in general.

The project does not include any of the exceptions to applicable exemptions listed in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2, which would disallow use of a categorical exemption. Those exceptions are:

- *The cumulative impact of the project and successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.*
- *There is a reasonable possibility that the project would result in a significant adverse impact due to unusual circumstances.*
- *The project will adversely affect a scenic highway or other scenic resources.*
- *The project site is located on a hazardous waste site listed pursuant to Government code Section 65962.5 (i.e. Cortese List).*
- *The project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

None of these exceptions apply to the proposed project. Staff believes this project qualifies for CEQA Guidelines §15301 – Class 1, *Existing Facilities* and §15302 – Class 2, *Replacement or Reconstruction* Categorical Exemptions; therefore preparation of a CEQA Initial Study is not required.

Contact Person: Javier Castruita

Telephone: (408) 741-2042

Date Mailed: _____

Signature: _____

Javier Castruita, Director of Facilities

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

DEC 13 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE