CHAPTER 4 - ALTERNATIVES

4-1 INTRODUCTION

Section 15126.6(a) of the *CEQA Guidelines* requires that an EIR "describe a range of reasonable alternatives to the project, or to the location of the project, which would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project, and evaluate the comparative merits of the alternatives." The objectives of the proposed Los Angeles Pierce College Facilities Master Plan are to:

- Create a more active and productive Pierce College: educationally, economically, and in the community.
- Improve the image of the Pierce College Campus by giving priority to high visibility/high use areas.
- Provide facilities to allow Pierce College to support projected enrollment in the year 2010.
- Enhance land resources and re-establish Pierce College as a center for urban agriculture.
- Create public/private partnerships to enhance academic programs and to provide support facilities.
- Create better and improved access to the tools that aid learning, including library facilities, technological research and instructional aids, and laboratory equipment.
- Create and develop new and emerging educational programs.
- Create and design facilities that promote the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building standards.

The word "feasible" is defined by the *State CEQA Guidelines* as "…capable of being accomplished in a successful manner within a reasonable period of time, taking into account economic, environmental, legal, social, and technological factors" (§ 15364).

This chapter discusses Master Plan alternatives that were previously developed during the Master Plan planning process as well as alternative development and enrollment growth scenarios that have been identified to reduce or avoid the significant environmental effects of the proposed Master Plan (see Section 5-2 of this EIR for a summary of significant effects). Also provided below is a discussion of the No Project Alternative as required by CEQA. Additionally, Section 4-6 discusses the "Environmentally Superior Alternative" as required by Section 1526.6(e)(2) of the *CEQA Guidelines*.

4-2 NO PROJECT ALTERNATIVE

According to the *CEQA Guidelines* (Section 15126.6(e)(3)(B)), the No Project Alternative is defined as the "circumstance under which the project does not proceed." The impacts of the No Project Alternative shall be analyzed "by projecting what would reasonably be expected to occur in the foreseeable future if the project were not approved, based on current plans and consistent with available infrastructure and community services." The purpose of describing and analyzing the No Project Alternative is "to allow decision-makers to compare the impacts of approving the proposed Project with the impacts of not approving the proposed Project."

Under the No Project Alternative, no comprehensive program of improvement projects would be implemented. The Pierce College campus would largely remain as is and would continue to operate and provide services in a manner similar to current conditions. New improvements and renovation work would be minimal, intermittent, and would consist primarily of those campus projects already approved and funded (e.g., perimeter fence replacement project, Parking Lot 7 renovation project). Maintenance activities would continue consistent with present and recent past practices. As a result of the limited extent of improvements that might occur under the No Project Alternative, future enrollment growth at the College could be constrained and would likely be less than the 23,252 total enrolled students projected in the 2010 Fall semester under the Master Plan. However, given recent trends, it is expected that some increases in student enrollment would still occur.

As a consequence, the No Project Alternative project would not result in many of the significant or potentially significant impacts of the proposed project described in Chapter 3 of this EIR.

Specifically, the No Project Alternative would not result in significant visual impacts that could occur under the Master Plan due to new development in the open space/farmland portions of the campus. No important views would be obstructed as could potentially occur if the Life-Long Learning Residences Community is constructed in the alternative location on the Chalk Hills. The Business Office/Student Store Building, a significant historic and visual resource, would not be demolished under this alternative. However, the No Project Alternative would also not result in the extensive improvements, e.g., new landscaping, renovation of existing facilities, and construction of new facilities, that would occur under the Master Plan that would enhance the appearance and visual quality of the campus.

The No Project Alternative would not result in the conversion of any farmland designated as Prime or Unique, which could occur under the Master Plan, though the impact would be less than significant.

The extensive construction proposed under the Master Plan could result in emissions of nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter during the peak construction day and quarter that would exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District significance thresholds, an unavoidable significant adverse impact. These impacts would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

The No Project Alternative would not result in the loss of feeding and resting habitat for Canada geese, a locally important species. This would be a significant but mitigable impact under the Master Plan.

Since the amount of construction that would occur under the No Project Alternative would be limited, it would be less likely than the Master Plan to disturb, destroy, or alter any unknown archaeological or paleontological resources that may be present on the campus.

Neither the No Project Alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in unavoidable significant geologic or seismic hazards. However, under the No Project Alternative, the seismically unsafe Business Office/Student Store Building, which was damaged in the 1994 Northridge earthquake, would remain and could pose a significant hazard in the event of another major earthquake.

Renovation projects proposed under the Master Plan could result in exposure of asbestos-containing building materials and/or lead based paint contaminants, a potentially significant but mitigable impact. Since the amount of renovation work that might occur under the No Project Alternative would be minimal, this alternative is less likely to result in the exposure of hazardous building materials than the Master Plan. Conversely, it is more likely that these hazardous materials would remain in campus buildings and would not be remediated under the No Project Alternative.

Unlike the Master Plan, the No Project Alternative would not substantially increase impervious surfaces resulting in increased runoff during storm events that could exacerbate existing drainage problems on the west side of the campus. However, the No Project Alternative would not include the drainage improvements proposed under the Master Plan that are intended to address and alleviate deficiencies in the existing campus drainage system.

No unavoidable significant adverse land use impacts would occur under the Master Plan or No Project Alternative. However it should be noted that existing land uses under the No Project Alternative would essentially remain unchanged. Thus, development of underutilized agricultural fields and open space to accommodate new educational facilities under the Master Plan would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

The significant but mitigable impacts of construction noise on campus academic facilities under the Master Plan would not occur under the No Project Alternative.

Neither the proposed Master Plan nor the No Project Alternative would result in significant environmental impacts due to increases in population or housing demand.

No significant impacts to public services would occur under the No Project Alternative or the proposed Master Plan.

Due to increases in enrollment and employment anticipated under the Master Plan and the resulting increases in traffic, significant impacts would occur at 19 of the 30 study intersections in the year 2010. With implementation of proposed mitigation measures, impacts at the 19 affected intersections would be reduced to a level of insignificance. It is expected that enrollment at Pierce College would continue to increase in future years under the No Project

Alternative, although that increase may not be as large as that anticipated under the Master Plan due to constraints posed by existing campus facilities. Thus increases in traffic would occur under both the No Project and Master Plan but the traffic impacts would likely be less under the No Project Alternative.

The increases in utility consumption or generation under the Master Plan would be greater than would occur under the No Project Alternative though neither alternative would result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts on utilities or service providers. However, it should be noted that proposed Master Plan projects would follow green, energy efficient, sustainable design guidelines as set forth in the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Guidelines. The College has, in fact, already started implementing these guidelines in existing buildings. Following such practices would reduce the amount of electricity consumed by the College. Thus, development of new buildings and renovation of existing buildings under the Master Plan is likely to result in greater energy savings than would occur under the No Project Alternative.

Although the No Project Alternative would not result in many of the impacts that could occur under the Master Plan, it would not fulfill the project objectives identified above. Under the No Project Alternative, improvements would be limited and consequently the needs of the College, students, and community would not be met.

4-3 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED DURING THE MASTER PLAN PLANNING PROCESS

During the Master Plan planning process, three alternative concepts were developed (Alternatives A, B, and C) and presented to the public in a series of community meetings and open houses. Illustrative and Land Use plans were developed for each of these alternative concepts. As depicted in those plans, these alternatives would include all of the facilities proposed under the preferred Master Plan but would differ primarily with respect to the location of the proposed facilities. These alternative concepts and their potential environmental effects are briefly described below.

4-3.1 Alternative A

Similar to the preferred Master Plan, Alternative A would concentrate most new facilities in or near the campus core. Major differences between this alternative and the proposed Master Plan include development of the new Sciences Partnership Building immediately south of Victory Boulevard and west of Mason Street and construction of the Life-Long Learning Residences Community in the horticultural area in the southeastern portion of the campus. As a consequence, most of the impacts of this alternative would be generally similar to the impacts that would occur under the proposed Master Plan. The exception would be potential visual impacts, which would be potentially greater than those that could occur under the proposed Master Plan due to the location of the Sciences Partnership Building and Life-Long Learning Residences Community in visually sensitive areas. The farmland along Victory Boulevard and De Soto Avenue and south of El Rancho Drive is considered an important community visual resource. The conversion of approximately 5 acres of farmland along the Victory Boulevard

frontage to construct the Sciences Partnership Building would be a significant visual impact. Under the Master Plan, the Victory Boulevard frontage would be preserved and used as a "greenbelt." The proposed location of the Life-Long Learning Residences Community is also a visually sensitive area because it is a large, densely vegetated green space in close proximity to the single-family residential neighborhood south of the campus. The conversion of a portion of this green space would result in a new visual impact that would not occur under the Master Plan.

4-3.2 Alternative B

The major differences between this alternative and the proposed Master Plan include: 1) development of the proposed Equestrian Education Center in an alternative location south of El Rancho Drive and west of Stadium Way; 2) development of a new 5-acre campus parking lot immediately south of Victory Boulevard and west of Mason Street; and 3) construction of the new Life-long Learning Residences Community in the Horticulture area in the southeast portion of the campus.

With the exception of visual impacts, most impacts under this alternative would be generally similar to the impacts that could occur under the proposed Master Plan. Development of the parking lot and resulting conversion of farmland along Victory Boulevard would be a new significant visual impact that would not occur under the Master Plan. The loss of green space in the southeastern corner of the campus to construct the new Life-Long Residences Community would also be a new visual impact. Development of the new Equestrian Education Center south of El Rancho Drive as an alternative location to the Master Plan site north of El Rancho Drive (i.e., the existing location of the equestrian facilities) could have beneficial as well as adverse effects. This alternative would preserve the agricultural fields in the vicinity of the existing equestrian center. Locating the Equestrian Education Center at the site proposed under this alternative would make it less visible from areas bordering the campus to the west and north; thus, there could be fewer adverse visual effects on those areas. However, this location would be closer to the single-family residential neighborhood to the south, which could create new visual, light intrusion, and noise impacts on this neighborhood.

4-3.3 Alternative C

This alternative would differ from the Master Plan in the following ways: 1) development of the Equestrian Education Center in a location immediately south of Victory Boulevard near the northwestern corner of the campus; 2) construction of the Life-Long Learning Residences Community in the Chalk Hills west of the stadium (note: this site is also identified in the proposed Master Plan described in this EIR as an alternate location for this facility); and 3) development of campus residential units in the Horticulture area near the southeastern corner of the campus.

Similar to Alternatives A and B, most impacts, with the exception of visual, and perhaps noise, would be similar to those that would occur under the proposed Master Plan. Development of the Equestrian Education Center in the visually sensitive farmland area along Victory Boulevard would result in a new significant visual impact. This location is also closer to the residential area north of Victory Boulevard than the site proposed under the Master Plan. Consequently, new

noise and odor impacts could occur that might adversely affect this neighborhood. Construction of the Life-Long Learning Residences Community in the Chalk Hills would result in the conversion of open space and could obstruct important views from the single-family residential area to the south, resulting in potentially significant visual impacts. These impacts would not occur if the facility is constructed in the Master Plan preferred location south of the library near the central campus core. Additionally, use of the green space area in the southwestern corner of the campus for development of new campus housing could result in new visual impacts that would not occur under the proposed Master Plan.

4-4 ALTERNATIVE LAND USE SCENARIO

This alternative would eliminate or relocate those facilities proposed under the Master Plan that could result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts. Thus, this alternative would not include a new expanded equestrian center (i.e., Equestrian Education Center). The existing equestrian facilities would remain essentially unchanged. The Child Development Center would be located on the site of the existing Agricultural Science Building or would remain in its current location at the northwestern corner of Winnetka Avenue and Victory Boulevard. The new Technology Center would be constructed in an alternate location on the site of the existing Campus Center and the existing Business Office/Student Store would be repaired, renovated, and reused rather than demolished as proposed under the Master Plan.

❑ Visual Resources

This alternative would not result in the significant visual impacts that could occur under the proposed Master Plan due to the development of new academic facilities on open space farmland, an important local visual resource. This alternative would also not result in the demolition of the Business Office/Student Store Building, which is considered to be both a historic and visual resource.

❑ Agricultural Resources

No or minimal amounts of land designated as Prime or Unique Farmland would be developed for alternative uses under this alternative. For comparison, the proposed Master Plan would result in the development of approximately 12 to 13 acres (20 to 25 acres if the Life-Long Learning Residences Community is developed in the alternative location on the Chalk Hills) of land designated as Prime or Unique Farmland, a less than significant impact.

❑ Air Quality

This alternative would result in slightly lower construction and operational air quality impacts than the proposed Master Plan. Under both alternatives, emissions of nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter, after implementation of proposed mitigation measures, would likely exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District significance thresholds for both the peak construction day and quarter. Although pollutant emissions during construction would be significant under this alternative, they would likely be less than would occur for the peak day and quarter under the Master Plan because this alternative would not

include development of the new 33-acre Equestrian Education Center. Neither the proposed Master Plan nor this alternative would result in significant operational air quality impacts.

❑ Biological Resources

Unlike the proposed Master Plan, this alternative would not result in the loss of feeding and resting habitat for the Canada goose, a locally important species. The loss of habitat under the Master Plan is a significant but mitigable impact.

❑ Historical Resources

This alternative would not result in the demolition of the Business Office/Student Store Building as is proposed under the Master Plan. The Business Office/Student Store Building appears eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources. Demolition of this historic building under the Master Plan would be an unavoidable significant adverse impact.

❑ Archaeological Resources

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan is expected to result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources that may be present on the campus.

❑ Paleontological Resources

This alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in potentially significant but mitigable impacts to paleontological resources.

❑ Geology/Soils/Seismicity

The geologic and seismic impacts or hazards would be similar for both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. It is anticipated that all hazards and impacts could be mitigated to a level of insignificance through proper design and engineering and adherence to applicable building codes. Under this alternative, the Business Office/Student Store Building, which was seriously damaged as a result of the Northridge earthquake, would be repaired, renovated, and reused rather than demolished as is proposed under the Master Plan.

❑ Hazardous Materials

Renovation projects under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in exposure of asbestos-containing building materials and/or lead-based paint contaminants, a potentially significant but mitigable impact.

❑ Hydrology and Water Quality

This alternative would result in fewer impervious surfaces than the proposed Master Plan since it would not include the new Equestrian Education Center and associated surface parking. Consequently, this alternative would generate less water runoff than the Master Plan in an area of

the campus where there are existing drainage deficiencies. However, these deficiencies would be corrected under both the Master Plan and this alternative as a result of proposed improvements to the campus drainage system.

❑ Land Use and Planning

No significant adverse land use impacts are anticipated under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan. However, it should be noted that this alternative would result in the development of approximately 12 to 13 fewer acres of farmland/open space than would occur under the Master Plan.

❑ Noise

Construction noise impacts on campus academic facilities could be potentially significant but mitigable under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. Neither alternative would result in significant operational noise impacts. However, since this alternative would not include the new Equestrian Education Center proposed under the Master Plan, the less than significant noise impacts that could be generated by public events held at this facility would not occur under this alternative.

❑ Population and Housing

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in significant increases in population or demand for housing that would result in significant impacts to the environment.

❑ Public Services

No significant impacts to public services would occur under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Transportation/Traffic and Parking

This alternative would result in slightly less traffic than the proposed Master Plan because it would not include the new Equestrian Education Center. However, like the Master Plan, significant traffic impacts are expected to occur with buildout of the campus facilities. Under the Master Plan, significant impacts would occur at 19 of the 30 study intersections in the year 2010. With implementation of the alternative mitigation scenarios, significant adverse impacts would be reduced to a level of insignificance at the 19 significantly affected intersections.

❑ Public Utilities

The increases in utility consumption or generation would be similar to those that could occur under the Master Plan though neither alternative would result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts on utilities or service providers. Development under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan would follow green, energy efficient, sustainable design guidelines as set forth in the

Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Guidelines. Following such practices would reduce the amount of electricity consumed by the College.

4-5 ALTERNATIVE ENROLLMENT GROWTH SCENARIO

Impacts due to implementation of the Master Plan would result from the construction and operation of new facilities in addition to projected increases in student enrollment and employment (e.g., more students and employees commuting to and from the College would result in increased traffic congestion). For the purposes of the analyses in this EIR, it was assumed that under the Master Plan, student enrollment would increase by an average of 4 percent per year starting with the 2003-2004 academic year, resulting in a total enrollment in the 2010 Fall semester of 23,252 students or 16,423 FTE students in the 2010-2011 academic year. However, given decreased state revenues and budget shortfalls due to the sliding economy, the per-student funding received by the state's community colleges "is not keeping up or reflecting the system's needs."[1] As a consequence, the state's community colleges may not be able to accommodate enrollment growth previously anticipated. Accordingly, an alternative scenario has been defined for this EIR based on the assumption that enrollment would increase by an average annual rate of 3 percent per year resulting in a total enrollment in the Fall of 2010 of 21,522 students, or approximately 93 percent of the enrollment of 23,252 students anticipated under the Master Plan. There would also be fewer College employees under this alternative. For this analysis, it is assumed that the improvements (i.e., new facilities, renovation projects, and public/private partnerships) proposed under the Master Plan would still occur under this alternative scenario.

❑ Visual Resources

The visual impacts of this alternative would be identical to those of the Master Plan. Under this alternative and the Master Plan, significant visual impacts could occur due to new campus development that would result in the conversion of farmland/open space, an important local visual resource. Demolition of the Business Office/Student Store Building, which is considered to be both a historic and visual resource, would be a significant impact under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Agricultural Resources

Both the proposed Master Plan and this alternative would result in the conversion of approximately 12 to 13 acres (20 to 25 acres if the Life-Long Learning Residences Community is developed in the alternate location on the Chalk Hills) of Prime or Unique Farmland to accommodate development of new educational facilities, a less than significant impact.

[1] www.cccco.edu/events/ccc_day/ccc_day_message.htm, June, 2002.

❑ Air Quality

Under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan, emissions of nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, and particulate matter after implementation of proposed mitigation measures would likely exceed South Coast Air Quality Management District significance thresholds for both the peak construction day and quarter. Operational air quality impacts would not be significant under either this alternative or the proposed Master Plan; however, this alternative would generate fewer pollutant emissions than the Master Plan because there would be fewer students and employees traveling to and from school.

❑ Biological Resources

This alternative and the proposed Master Plan would result in the loss of feeding and resting habitat for the Canada goose, a locally important species. The loss of habitat is a significant but mitigable impact.

❑ Historical Resources

This alternative and the proposed Master Plan would result in the demolition of the Business Office/Student Store Building. The Business Office/Student Store Building appears eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historical Resources. Demolition of this historic building would be an unavoidable significant adverse impact.

❑ Archaeological Resources

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan is expected to result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts to archaeological resources that may be present on the campus.

❑ Paleontological Resources

This alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in potentially significant but mitigable impacts to paleontological resources.

❑ Geology/Soils/Seismicity

The geologic and seismic impacts or hazards would be similar for both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. It is anticipated that all hazards and impacts can be mitigated to a level of insignificance through proper design and engineering and adherence to applicable building codes.

❑ Hazardous Materials

Renovation projects under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan could result in exposure of asbestos-containing building materials and/or lead based paint contaminants, a potentially significant but mitigable impact.

❑ Hydrology and Water Quality

The impacts under this alternative would be similar to those that could occur under the proposed Master Plan. Under both alternatives, the amount of impervious surfaces would increase due to new development, which would result in increased runoff during storm events. This additional runoff could exacerbate existing drainage deficiencies in the western portion of the campus. However, these deficiencies would be corrected under both the Master Plan and this alternative as a result of proposed improvements to the campus drainage system.

❑ Land Use and Planning

No significant adverse land use impacts are anticipated under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan. Both alternatives, however, would result in the development of underutilized farmland/open space.

❑ Noise

Construction noise impacts on campus academic facilities could be potentially significant but mitigable under both this alternative and the proposed Master Plan. Neither alternative would result in significant operational noise impacts, though the increases in traffic noise under this alternative would be slightly less than would occur under the proposed Master Plan because there would be fewer students traveling in motor vehicles to and from school under this alternative.

❑ Population and Housing

Neither this alternative nor the proposed Master Plan would result in significant increases in population or demand for housing that would result in significant impacts to the environment.

❑ Public Services

No significant impacts to public services would occur under this alternative or the proposed Master Plan.

❑ Transportation/Traffic and Parking

This alternative would result in less traffic than the Master Plan because of lower anticipated future student enrollment levels. Under the Master Plan, significant traffic impacts are expected to occur at 19 of the 30 study intersections in the year 2010. With implementation of proposed mitigation measures, impacts at the 19 significantly affected intersections would be reduced to a level of insignificance. Due to the lower enrollment and employee levels assumed under this alternative (approximately 93 percent of what would occur under the Master Plan), there would be fewer intersections significantly affected by this alternative.

❑ Public Utilities

The increases in utility consumption or generation would be similar to those that could occur under the Master Plan though neither alternative would result in unavoidable significant adverse impacts on utilities or service providers. Development under this alternative and the proposed Master Plan would follow green, energy efficient, sustainable design guidelines as set forth in the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design Guidelines. Following such practices would reduce the amount of electricity consumed by the College.

4-6 ENVIRONMENTALLY SUPERIOR ALTERNATIVE

The environmentally superior alternative would be the No Project Alternative because of the absence of environmental impacts. However, as discussed above, the No Project Alternative would not fulfill the project objectives. Under the No Project Alternative, improvements would be limited and consequently the needs of the College, students, and community would not be met. Facilities would not be provided that could support anticipated future enrollment levels. Landscaping and other improvements including new structures that would enhance the appearance of the College would be limited or would not be provided. No public/private partnerships that could provide support for and enhance academic programs would be implemented. Under the No Project Alternative, the College's ability to create and develop new and emerging educational programs would be constrained.

According to the *CEQA Guidelines*, if the environmentally superior alternative is the No Project Alternative, the EIR shall identify an environmentally superior alternative among the other alternatives. The Alternative Land Use Scenario would be the environmentally superior alternative among the other build alternatives because it would not result in the significant visual and historic impacts of the proposed Master Plan. In addition, it would generate slightly less traffic, consume slightly less electricity and other utilities, result in less extensive drainage impacts, and convert fewer acres of Prime and Unique farmland than the proposed Master Plan. However, this alternative would not include development of the new Equestrian Education Center, and therefore would not provide to the community and College the benefits of this proposed facility. The new Equestrian Education Center would serve the College's Equine program needs as well as provide shared usage for the community and private enterprises. In addition to new stables, barns, and bridle paths, a new 95,000-square-foot multi-purpose arena would be constructed with permanent seating for 2,500 persons. The multi-purpose arena/events center would be designed to accommodate rodeos, horse shows, other live stock events, concerts, exhibits, and conventions. The new Equestrian Education Center is considered to be an important component of the Master Plan by the College and the District that would also greatly benefit the community. Elimination of the new Equestrian Education Facility would have major impacts on the College's academic program and would prevent the College from attaining the goals outlined for the Equine program in the Academic Master Plan.