ADDENDUM # 1
UC Merced Medical Education Building Project
Environmental Impact Report
State Clearinghouse Number 2021040047

Changes to the UC Merced Medical Education Building Project

April 28, 2023

This Addendum discusses proposed minor revisions to the UC Merced Medical Education Building Project, in relation to the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA").

Background

In November 2022, the Board of the Regents of the University of California ("the Regents") certified the UC Merced Medical Education Building Project Environmental Impact Report ("MEB Project EIR") and approved the construction for the Site and Make-Ready portion of the UC Merced Medical Education Building (MEB) Project ("MEB Project" or "Project") and authorized the Campus to complete the design of the Project. UC Merced then proceeded with the detailed design of the new building.

The Project evaluated in the EIR for its environmental impacts consisted of a new academic building, including a site access road and parking lot, in the southeastern portion of the existing campus in an area that is known on the campus as Cottonwood Meadow. The new academic building would house UC Merced's Medical Education and related programs. The existing storm water detention basins that are currently located in Cottonwood Meadow would be filled as part of the Project to accommodate the siting of the new building, parking lot, access roadway, and pedestrian improvements. A new stormwater detention basin would be constructed in the southern portion of the campus southeast of Parking Lot No.4 and west of Fairfield Canal to replace the stormwater detention capacity that would be lost from the development of Cottonwood Meadow and to also handle the additional runoff that would be generated from the construction of the Project.

As analyzed in the EIR, the new academic building was envisioned to include approximately 190,000 outside gross square feet ("ogsf") of building space. After deducting the space associated with common areas, such as lobbies, hallways, restrooms, and mechanical space, the building would provide approximately 118,750 assignable square feet ("asf") of instructional, academic office, research, and community facing space. The new building would comprise a large rectangular-shaped, four-story building, consisting of two wings that would wrap around a central courtyard. The building would be approximately 65 feet in height (60 feet plus a 5-foot parapet) and the building footprint would occupy approximately 2 acres.

The site planning and other aspects of the MEB would ensure the integration of the new building within the existing campus fabric. Automobile access to the site would be via the Bellevue Road extension and Cottonwood Loop Road, and an access roadway to the new building. A moderately-sized parking lot with 60 spaces would be provided adjacent to the new building. The parking lot would also include electrical vehicle stalls/charging stations.

The Project would include pedestrian links from MEB to the Academic Quad and Academic Walk, a main pedestrian path along the eastern side of the campus. These connections would allow the building functions to be fully integrated into the academic core of the UC Merced campus.

The maximum number of persons that would be accommodated in the new building would be 2,811 students and 188 faculty and staff, for a total of about 2,999 persons. Of the 2,811 students, 1,542 would be existing under-grad and post-grad students enrolled in the Psychological Sciences and Public Health departments and about 1,269 would be new students. Of the 188 faculty and staff, 139 would be existing faculty and staff in the Psychological Sciences and Public Health departments. Thus, 1,681 of the 2,999 persons that would occupy the MEB Building are already enrolled as students or employed by the Campus as of 2020, and therefore the net new population due to this Project would be on the order of about 1,318 persons.

Project construction is anticipated to occur over a 36-month period between fall 2023 and fall 2026.

Proposed Revision to the Medical Education Building Project

As noted above, following authorization by the Regents, UC Merced proceeded with the detailed design of the new building. That process resulted in some changes to the UCM-ME Building that are summarized in **Table 1** and described in detail below. The size of the building was previously identified in the EIR in terms of outside gross square footage (ogsf) but would be more accurately labeled as gross square footage (gsf). The analysis in the EIR is unaffected by this. The total number of occupants for the building remains unchanged and the footprint of the building has been reduced. Assignable square footage increases slightly from what was identified in the EIR, as does gross square footage.

Table 1: Comparison of the Previously Analyzed and Revised Project

Project Feature	Previously Analyzed Project	Revised Project
Building Space - GSF	190,000 (identified as ogsf in EIR)	199,500 (5 percent increase)
Building Space - ASF	118,750	123,900 (4.3 percent increase)
Building Height	65 feet (60-foot building, plus 5-foot parapet)	85 feet (68-foot building, plus 9-foot mechanical penthouse, and 8-foot PV canopy structure)
PV Panels	None	Capacity for up to 700kw
Total Number of Occupants	2,999 (2,211 students and 188 faculty/staff)	2,999 (2,211 students and 188 faculty/staff) (no change)
Building Footprint	2 acres	1.53 acres (23.5 percent decrease)
Total Area of impervious surfaces	4.3 acres	4.4 acres (2.3 percent increase)

As **Table 1** shows, the total amount of gross building space would increase by about 9,500 sf due to changes in the design of the Project. The assignable space, which is the space that would be occupied and used by faculty, staff and students, would increase by about 5,150 sf. This increase in total assignable space is primarily due to the inclusion of more instructional and instructional support space in the Project as it was determined by the Campus that more instructional space was needed. The number of occupants of the building would not increase from the number previously analyzed.

The Project, as previously analyzed, did not include any photovoltaic panels as part of the project design. The building's roof has been designed with a shade canopy that the PV can be installed upon. The building will include infrastructure to accommodate photovoltaic (PV) that attach to the roof top shade structure, for future capacity of 700kw. As a result of the PV canopy and the placement of a mechanical penthouse on the roof of the building, the revised Project will be about 85 feet in height, compared to the previously analyzed 65-foot-high building.

In conjunction with the revised building design, the site plan has been revised to eliminate certain pathways while other pedestrian pathways have been modified. The parking lot is still of the same size as before, but its location and layout has been revised as has also the alignment of the access roadway that would connect the new building to Cottonwood Meadow Loop Road. As a result of these minor changes to the site plan, the total amount of impervious surfaces that would be added by the Project has changed from 4.3 acres to 4.4 acres, although the building footprint has decreased from 2 acres to 1.53 acres. The overall 43.5-acre Project Area, comprising the building site, the area that would be used for construction staging, and the area where the proposed storm water detention basin would be located, is substantially unchanged from before.

Addendum to the Medical Education Building Project EIR

This Addendum was prepared to describe the changes to the Project and determine whether the project changes would alter the conclusions of the prior environmental analysis prepared and presented in the Medical Education Building Project EIR. CEQA Guidelines Section 15162 calls for the preparation of a subsequent EIR or Negative Declaration if certain conditions have been met. These conditions include:

1. Substantial changes are proposed in the project which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.

2. Substantial changes occur with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken which will require major revisions of the previous EIR or Negative Declaration due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; or

3. New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise or reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the Negative Declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:

    a. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or Negative Declaration;

b. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;

c. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or

d. Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

UC Merced has evaluated the revised Project relative to these conditions, and has determined that, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162, a subsequent EIR or Negative Declaration need not be prepared because:

a) No new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects would occur as a result of the revised Project. As discussed below, the increase in building space would not increase the severity of air quality, hydrology and water quality, transportation, public service, and tribal cultural resource impacts.

b) Since the MEB Project EIR was certified, one additional project has been proposed in the vicinity of the campus. The University Vista project would involve the development of approximately 290 acres at the northwest corner of Bellevue and Lake Roads. The proposed project is envisioned as a mixed-use community, integrating market rate housing, affordable housing, student housing, retail, entertainment, hospitality, restaurant, office and research. At buildout, the project is estimated to accommodate the development of approximately 5,576 dwelling units and approximately 1,817,000 square feet of non-residential uses. The proposed land uses are generally consistent with the Merced Vision 2030 land use designations and the Bellevue Community Plan.

   This project was not specifically listed in the MEB Project EIR as a cumulative project because the application for this project was not received by the City of Merced when the analysis for the MEB Project EIR commenced in 2021. However, as the University Vista project is consistent with the Merced Vision 2030 land use designations and the Bellevue Community Plan, the development of this site was accounted for in the cumulative impact analysis; the cumulative impact analysis in the MEB Project EIR was based on growth and development projected in Merced Vision 2030, the City of Merced's General Plan.

   There are no other changes in circumstances in which the revised Project would be undertaken.

a) The revised Project would not require new mitigation measures or result in mitigation measures that are considerably different from those already imposed on the previously analyzed Project as part of project authorization. As with the previously analyzed Project, all of the applicable 2020 LRDP mitigation measures would be part of the revised Project and would be implemented during project construction and operations.

The revised Project would not alter any of the conclusions of the MEB Project EIR analyses under any analysis topic area. Below are the environmental topic areas that warrant discussion:

1. **Aesthetics**

With respect to Aesthetics, although with an overall height of about 85 feet, the building would be taller than the previously analyzed 65-foot building. The proposed project would be developed on a portion of the campus that is designated CMU. The proposed structure would be located near the existing academic core and would be similar in height and scale to other developments in the vicinity, where building heights range between approximately 45 and 80 feet in height. The proposed project would also not include aboveground infrastructure that would require screening.

The UC Merced campus, including the project site, is not located adjacent to a state scenic highway (Caltrans 2022) and does not contain scenic resources such as unique trees, rocky outcrops, or historic buildings. The mass and height of the proposed structure would be the same scale as existing development on campus, and thus would not adversely affect public views of the campus from Lake Road.

The height and mass of the proposed structure would be consistent with the height and mass of the existing structures in the surrounding area such as the Arts and Computational Sciences Building and the Glacier Point student housing buildings. Furthermore, the proposed structure would be consistent with design guidance in the campus Physical Design Framework. The architectural design of the proposed structure would adhere to the campus aesthetic vision and reflect UC Merced's vision for a distinctive environment that is dynamic and engaging for learning, living, and working. The proposed structure would create a visual connection with strong building lines, complementary forms, and careful arrangement of building massing.

Therefore, the visual impacts would not be substantially greater than reported before and would continue to be less than significant with the implementation of applicable LRDP mitigation measures.

2. **Air Quality**

Criteria air pollutant emissions that would be generated during project construction were estimated in the MEB Project EIR based on the size (gross square feet) of the new building; land acreage that would be disturbed during construction of the new building and the filling of the storm water basins; and activities through the project site and in the construction staging area. The estimated emissions were substantially below the applicable San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District (SJVAPCD) thresholds, and the impact was found to be less than significant. The area to be graded and filled is unchanged from before as is the staging area. Only the building size has increased by about 5 percent and the project impervious surfaces have increased by about 2.3 percent. Both increases are not large enough to substantially increase the criteria air pollutant emissions that would be generated during project construction and the air quality impact from project construction would remain less than significant.

The EIR analysis of criteria air pollutant emissions from building operations also found that the operational emissions would be low and would not exceed the applicable SJVAPCD thresholds; hence the operational impact would be less than significant. As noted, there would be no increase in project occupants and hence no increase in the estimated emissions from vehicle trips associated with the occupants. The small increase in building size would not substantially increase other operational emissions such that they would exceed the thresholds, and the air quality impact from revised Project operations would remain less than significant.

The small increase in building size would not substantially increase carbon monoxide emissions, result in a conflict with the applicable air quality plan, nor hinder air quality attainment and maintenance efforts for criteria pollutants.

In summary, air quality impacts of the revised Project would not be significant and would not change the conclusions of the MEB Project EIR. No new or modified mitigation measures would be required.

3. **Hydrology and Water Quality**

The MEB Project EIR analyzed the hydrology and water quality impacts from the construction of the new building, the filling of the existing Cottonwood Meadow stormwater management basins, and the construction of the new replacement basin, and concluded that the Project would not substantially alter the existing drainage patterns to result in erosion, siltation or flooding. The revised Project would minimally increase the amount of impervious surfaces on the project site (by about 2.3 percent) and therefore would not result in more runoff than previously estimated. Therefore, the impact related to altered drainage patterns would still remain less than significant. Similarly, with a minimal increase in impervious surfaces and runoff compared to the previous impact analysis, the cumulative impact on local and regional flooding would also remain less than significant.

In summary, the revised Project would not change the conclusions of the MEB Project EIR with respect to hydrology and water quality. No new or modified mitigation measures would be required.

4. **Public Services**

The MEB Project EIR analyzed the impacts of the new building on public services, specifically the provision of fire service. The EIR noted that the Project would add approximately 190,000 gross square feet of building space to the UC Merced Campus and accommodate about 2,999 students, faculty and staff. Based on a review of the Project, the County determined that development of the Project would require one additional fire engineer to adequately serve the Project and continue to adequately serve the UC Merced campus. Since Station 85 is at staffing and apparatus capacity, the additional fire engineer would be stationed at Station 86 in Planada. The EIR further noted that based on input from Cal Fire, the County is currently in the process of planning for the expansion of Station 86. Thus, the expansion of this station is occurring independent of the Project and is not being triggered by development of the MEB. With the already planned expansion of Fire Station 86, the Project itself would not require the development of new fire stations or expansion of existing fire stations the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts. The revised Project would not substantially increase the amount of building space (an increase of about 14 percent) and would not increase the number of persons who would occupy the building. Although the new building would be taller than the 65-foot building previously analyzed, the 85-foot building would not be much taller than the other 80-foot buildings that are already on the campus and adequately served by the fire service provided by the County and Cal Fire. Therefore, the impact on fire service would still remain less than significant. For the same reasons, the cumulative impact on fire services would also remain less than significant.

In summary, the revised Project would not change the conclusions of the MEB Project EIR with respect to public services. No new or modified mitigation measures would be required.

5. **Transportation**

The MEB Project EIR analyzed the impacts of the new building on transportation, including the change in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) as a result of project operations. The EIR analysis found that the Project would not conflict with a plan, ordinance or policy related to roadway facilities. The VMT analysis found that with the addition of the Project, the VMT per worker for the campus would remain more than 15 percent below the existing regional VMT per worker, and the impact would be less than significant. The revised Project would not increase the number of persons accommodated in the new building and therefore would not change the results of the previous analysis. Hence the impact would remain less than significant. For the same reasons, the cumulative impact on VMT would also remain less than significant.

In summary, the revised Project would not change the conclusions of the MEB Project EIR with respect to transportation. No new or modified mitigation measures would be required.

6. **Tribal Cultural Resources**

   The revised Project would not involve any change in the area to be disturbed or altered and therefore, potential impacts on unknown tribal cultural resources would remain less than significant. The revised Project would not change the conclusions of the MEB Project EIR with respect to tribal cultural resources. No new or modified mitigation measures would be required.

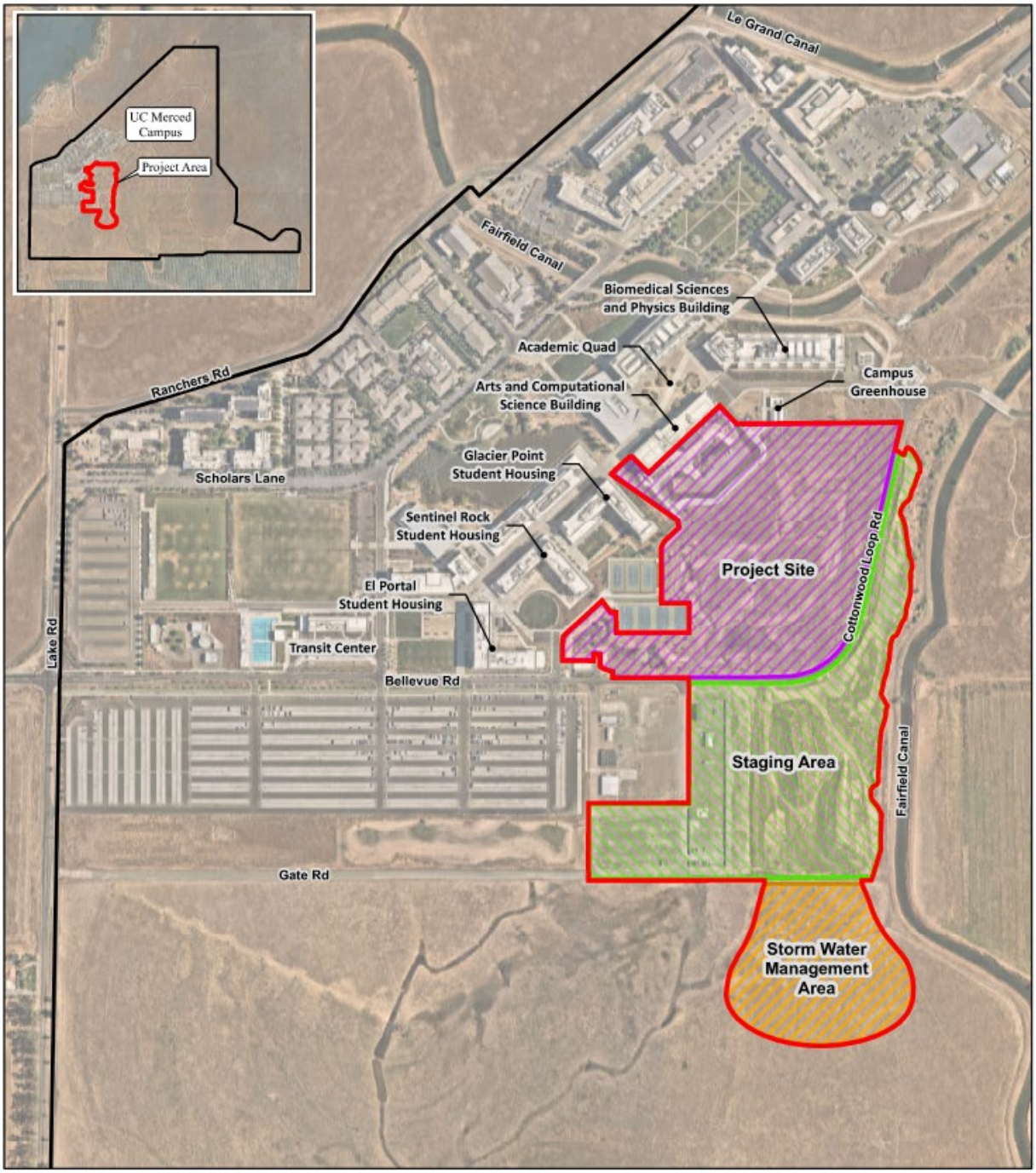
7. **All Other Resources**

   Other analysis topics, including Agricultural and Forest Resources, Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Geology and Soils, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, Land Use and Planning, Mineral Resources, Population and Housing, Recreation, Utilities and Service Systems, and Wildfire, would be unaffected by the revised Project.

8. **Other CEQA Considerations**

   As the revised Project would essentially result in the same less than significant impacts as the previously analyzed Project, it would not affect the conclusions of the alternatives analysis, growth inducing impacts, or analysis of irreversible changes as presented in the MEB Project EIR.

The revised Project does not entail substantial changes that would require major revisions to the existing MEB Project EIR, nor would new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects occur. Since certification of the MEB Project EIR, no substantial changes have occurred in the circumstances under which the revised Project would be undertaken that were not already analyzed in the EIR, and no new information has emerged that would materially change any of the analyses or conclusions of the certified MEB Project EIR. Therefore, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15164, this addendum, in conjunction with the MEB Project Final EIR, serves as the appropriate environmental documentation that the Regents may use to approve the final design of the Project. No additional environmental review is necessary.



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED

LEGEND

- Project Area (46.5 acres)
- Project Site (19.4 acres)
- Staging Area (18.0 acres)
- Stormwater Management Area (8.0 acres)
- UC Merced Campus Boundary

0 250 500 FEET

SOURCE: Nearmap (05/2022).

I:\BTI2002.01\GIS\Maps\EIR\Figure 3-2_Project Area.mxd (8/10/2022)

FIGURE 3-2

UC Merced Medical Education Building Project
Merced County, California

Project Area

Figure 2: Site Plan