NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: ______________________________________
   (Agency)

   ______________________________________
   (Address)

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Lead Agency:
Agency Name: Trustees of the California State University
              California State University, Northridge
Street Address: 18111 Nordhoff Street
City/State/Zip: Northridge, CA 91330-8219
Contact: Colin Donahue, Director, FPDC
         (Facilities Planning, Design & Construction)

Consulting Firm (if applicable):
Firm Name: Impact Sciences, Inc.
Street Address: 234 E. Colorado Blvd., Suite 205
City/State/Zip: Pasadena, CA 91101
Contact: Anne Doehne, Project Manager

California State University will be the Lead Agency and will prepare an environmental impact report (EIR) for the project identified below. We need to know the views of your agency concerning the scope and content of the environmental information that are germane to your agency’s statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Your agency may need to use the EIR prepared by our agency when considering project impacts on resources for which you are responsible.¹

The project description, location, and the potential environmental effects are contained in the attached materials. A copy of the Initial Study (☐ is ☒ is not) attached.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, your response must be sent at the earliest possible date but not later than 30 days after receipt of this notice.

Please send your response to Colin Donahue at the address shown above. We will need the name for a contact person in your agency.

Project Title: Envision 2035, California State University, Northridge Master Plan

Project Location: Northridge Los Angeles
                 City (nearest) County

¹ Reference: California Administrative Code, Title 14 (CEQA Guidelines), Sections 15082(a), 15103, 15375.
**Project Description** (brief): Envision 2035 is the 30-year master plan for the California State University, Northridge (CSUN) campus to accommodate future growth in compliance with California State University system requirements, through a proposed program of improvements to campus open space and landscaping; academic core facilities; housing; traffic and parking; and student services. The Master Plan would permit the development of approximately 1.15 million gross square feet of additional building area to accommodate up to 10,000 additional Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) students. CSUN currently has a maximum enrollment capacity of 25,000 FTEs; the Envision 2035 Master Plan would increase that capacity to 35,000 FTEs in order to help meet projected demand for higher education in California.

Date: ________________________________  Signature: ________________________________
Title:  Colin Donahue, Director, FPDC
Telephone: (818) 677-2561
ENVISION 2035, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE MASTER PLAN PROJECT DESCRIPTION

LEAD AGENCY

The Trustees of the California State University
California State University, Northridge
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, California 91330-8219

LOCATION OF PROJECT

California State University, Northridge (CSUN) is centrally located in the community of Northridge, part of the City of Los Angeles. As shown in Figure 1, Regional and Campus Map, Northridge is located in the San Fernando Valley, approximately 22 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. Adjacent communities include Porter Ranch, Knollwood, Granada Hills, San Fernando, Panorama City, Van Nuys, Chatsworth, and West Hills. Major regional access to Northridge is provided by the Ronald Reagan Freeway (CA-118), the San Diego Freeway (I-405), and the Ventura Freeway (US-101). The community is also served by MetroLink’s Ventura County Line, which extends from Union Station near downtown Los Angeles to Oxnard.

As shown in Figure 1, CSUN is located in north-central Northridge. The campus occupies a 356-acre suburban site and is divided into North and South campuses. The North Campus is bounded on the north by Devonshire Street; on the east by Zelzah Avenue; and on the west by Lindley Avenue. The South Campus is partially bounded on the north by Halsted Street; on the south by Nordhoff Street; on the east by Zelzah Avenue; and on the west by Darby Avenue.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT SITE

The California State University (CSU) system is part of the state’s three-tiered educational system created under the 1954 State Master Plan for Higher Education. This system also includes the University of California four-year system and the two-year Community College system. CSUN is one of 23 CSU campuses and one of the 10 CSU campuses in Southern California. Enrollment for CSUN’s Fall 2003 Semester was 32,997 students, or 24,472 Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs). The campus employs approximately 3,300 faculty and staff.

CSUN was established in 1956 as the San Fernando Valley Campus of Los Angeles State College, and was originally dedicated to teacher training. In 1958 it was renamed San Fernando Valley State College, one of seven state campuses created that year by the State Legislature. In 1972, the campus was
designated as California State University, Northridge, and has evolved into a comprehensive liberal arts and professional college, offering undergraduate degrees in 61 disciplines and graduate degrees in 42 disciplines, as well as professional credentials.

CSUN is presently developed with just over 3.4 million gross square feet of building area housed in approximately 100 buildings. The campus comprises a collection of academic and administrative buildings, student housing, athletic facilities and playfields, and quads and courtyards, with perimeter parking structures and surface parking lots.

Surrounding land uses include a mix of low-density single-family and multi-family residential neighborhoods to the north and east, with scattered commercial uses near the campus; and predominantly single-family residential neighborhoods to the south. The North Campus is bordered on the west by single and multi-family residential neighborhoods, while land uses west of the South Campus are predominantly multi-family residential housing, with Northridge’s designated commercial center lining the Reseda Boulevard corridor.
DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

The CSU system requires each campus to maintain a master plan guiding its development. The CSU system further requires that the campuses undertake periodic review and revision of their master plans, in part to ensure that proposed capital improvement programs remain in compliance with those plans. The CSU system is designed to accept the top academic one-third of graduating high school students, and each campus within the system is required to accommodate its share of present and anticipated future students. The CSU system is facing unprecedented projected demand for higher education over the next 10 years and beyond.

The Envision 2035 Master Plan is the first major revision of the CSUN Master Plan since 1998. The 1998 Campus Master Plan was developed in response to the January 1994 Northridge earthquake, which damaged many buildings on the CSUN campus and led to the demolition of a number of facilities. Accordingly, the focus of the 1998 plan was the reconstruction of damaged facilities and infrastructure; siting of replacement buildings in the campus core; vehicular and pedestrian circulation improvements; and identification of the need for future improvements.

The goals established by the 1998 Campus Master Plan have largely been met. Consequently, the present Envision 2035 Master Plan is intended to build on the success of its predecessor, accommodate the projected increase in student population over the next 30 years, and allow for the existing academic programs and support services to modernize, expand, and improve.

These changes are planned to take place over a 30-year period within the existing campus boundaries. The scope of the Envision 2035 Master Plan includes the following:

- Accommodating students through campus growth and improvements in the areas of academic curricula, support services, housing opportunities, and parking facilities;
- Functional enhancements of physical facilities and features, including buildings, open space and recreational/athletic facilities, vehicular-bicycle-pedestrian circulation, and utility/technology upgrades; and
- Aesthetic enhancements including, but not limited to, landscaping, open space reconfiguration, design guidelines, campus perimeter enhancements, and environmental protection.

The Envision 2035 Master Plan focuses on five key planning components: Landscape and Open Space; Academic Core; Housing; Traffic and Parking Management; and Student Services. These topics were derived from a year-long and ongoing process that included consideration of sound campus planning principles, input received from the CSUN Envision 2035 Master Plan Committee, and solicitation of campus and community feedback.
Each of the five project components is briefly described below.

The **Landscape and Open Space** component proposes to create a view “window” into the campus from Nordhoff Street; preserve and enhance existing quads; frame open space courtyards and pedestrian pathways through the careful siting of new buildings; increase the number of shaded seating areas for casual use; preserve and revitalize the orange grove; reinforce the campus identity through the use of signature perimeter landscaping; and increase playfields for instructional, recreational, and athletics use by nearly five acres, to 45.6 acres.

The **Academic Core** component proposes to accommodate and concentrate new academic growth in the campus core; develop 1.15 million gross square feet of new academic/administrative space while maintaining the campus open-space system; recommend potential sites for future facilities; ensure expansion potential for all academic programs; and provide for the strategic location of campus activity “hubs”. This expansion would increase CSUN’s Master Plan enrollment capacity by 10,000 FTEs, from the existing 25,000 FTE capacity to 35,000.

The **Housing** component would increase housing availability and choices for students, faculty, and staff. For students, the Master Plan proposes to create up to 2,500 new bed spaces, including University Park Apartments infill, two new student housing clusters near the campus academic core, a new dining facility, and nearby student residential parking. For faculty and staff, the Master Plan proposes up to 600 new units on campus, including a mix of housing accommodations yet to be determined; amenities such as open space and recreational areas; and space for ground-floor retail establishments.

Proposed **Traffic and Parking Management** features include a net increase of up to 4500 parking spaces accommodated mainly in parking structures; the provision for balanced parking across the east and west sides of the campus; the development of a transit hub within the campus; landscaped vehicular entries; a new campus entrance from Nordhoff Street; reconfiguration of campus pedestrian circulation to emphasize pedestrian zones; and implementation of a second campus tram route.

The **Student Services** component includes a recommended site for a new Student Recreation Center near the University Student Union and playfields; a site for a new Student Health Center; and a new student dining center.

The Envision 2035 Master Plan would be implemented incrementally over the course of its 30-year life, although specific development proposals are likely to be identified, constructed, and put into operation following project approval by The Trustees of the CSU.
Figure 1: Regional and Campus Map
DISCRETIONARY ACTIONS/ENTITLEMENTS

The Trustees of California State University are responsible for approval and adoption of the Envision 2035 Master Plan and certification of the EIR. The design and construction of individual Campus buildings are approved by the Trustees of the California State University in accordance with state procedures. State Fire Marshal review of new Campus buildings is required for fire and life safety. Additional analysis may include a Water Supply Assessment (WSA), consistent with Senate Bill 610, if deemed necessary.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF THE PROJECT

Based on preliminary review of the Envision 2035 Master Plan, consistent with Section 15060 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the CSU has determined that an EIR should be prepared to analyze the potential environmental effects of the proposed project. Based on this preliminary review, the CSU proposes research, analysis, and study of the following environmental topics in this EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- Noise
- Recreation
- Population & Housing
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities & Services Systems

The CSU has also determined that there is not a likelihood of potentially significant effects related to the following environmental topics. The Trustees propose that the EIR indicate the reasons why these effects were determined not to be significant and are therefore not addressed in detail in the EIR:

- Agricultural Resources
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology & Soils
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Public Services

The Trustees of the CSU will consider the comments received in response to this Notice of Preparation in determining the scope and content of the EIR for this project. Any comments provided should identify specific topics of environmental concern and the reason for suggesting their evaluation in the EIR.

This Notice of Preparation is intended as preliminary scoping of possible significant environmental effects for purposes of soliciting agency and public input, and is not a determination of the significance of the project’s effects on environmental resources.
Please provide your comments in writing to:

California State University, Northridge
18111 Nordhoff Street
Northridge, California 91330-8219

Attention: Colin Donahue, Director, Facilities Planning, Design & Construction

Thank you for your participation in the environmental review process for the Envision 2035 Master Plan Project.