CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO

# NOTICE OF PREPARATION

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, CHICO PROPOSED MASTER PLAN

**DATE:** April 29, 2019

**TO:** Public Agencies and Interested Parties

**PROJECT TITLE:** California State University, Chico Proposed Master Plan

**LEAD AGENCY:** The Board of Trustees of the California State University
401 Golden Shore
Long Beach, California 90802-4210

California State University, Chico
400 West First Street
Chico, California 95929

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report for the California State University, Chico Proposed Master Plan

The Board of Trustees of the California State University (Trustees) is the lead agency for the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; California Public Resources Code, section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations [CCR] 15000 et seq.); pursuant to the California State University CEQA Procedures for Land Use Planning and Environmental Review (referenced in State University Administrative Manual, section 9016). Per California Education Code section 66606, the Board of Trustees is the governing body and owner of the California State University, Chico (CSU, Chico) campus, and has the authority to certify the EIR, adopt the Master Plan map, and provide for schematic design approvals. CSU, Chico will act as point of contact for the CEQA process.

The Trustees have prepared this Notice of Preparation (NOP) in accordance with CEQA Guidelines sections 15082(a) and 15375. The Project consists of the proposed CSU, Chico Master Plan, including Project Design Features (PDFs) drawn from the Master Plan Guidelines. The EIR will analyze the environmental effects of the proposed Master Plan and PDFs at a program level. Implementation of the Project would provide space and facility needs to support planned growth to 18,600 full-time-equivalent (FTE) students, with housing for potentially all first-time freshmen. Overall, the Project would include approximately 1.6 million gross square feet (GSF) of net new building space for academic, student life and support, student housing, shared uses, administration, service centers, student recreation, athletics, and parking. Over the course of the plan horizon, approximately 21 existing campus buildings would be renovated, and 18 new buildings constructed. Additionally, outdoor athletics and recreation space is planned. The planning horizon for the Master

Plan is the year 2030. However, buildout of the complete Master Plan is expected to take place beyond 2030. See Project Description below for additional information about the Project.

**Responsible Agencies:** The Trustees request responsible agencies' comments on the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to a responsible agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the Project, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Sections 15082(b) and 15103. Responsible agencies may need to use the EIR to consider permits or other approvals within their jurisdiction.

**Organizations and Interested Parties:** The Trustees request comments and concerns regarding the scope and evaluation of potential environmental issues associated with the Project.

**Project Location:** The existing CSU, Chico campus is located in the City of Chico, California. The 132-acre, main campus is generally bounded by the Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way on the west; by West Sacramento, Legion, and Mansion Avenues on the north; by the Esplanade, Children's Park, Salem, and Normal Streets on the east; and by West Second and West Third Streets on the south. Outside of the main campus, CSU, Chico also consists of a 650-bed apartment complex (part of University Housing) approximately one and one-half miles to the northwest and an 800-acre farm approximately five miles to the south. See attached Figures 1 through 2c for the regional and Project site location and setting.

**Project Description:** The Project consists of the proposed CSU, Chico Master Plan, including PDFs drawn from the Master Plan Guidelines. Figure 3 provides the existing Master Plan and Figures 4 and 5 show the proposed Master Plan in an illustrative version.

The main campus includes the primary academic and student life functions of CSU, Chico. The campus is organized around the historic core in the center of campus, as well as Big Chico Creek that runs east to west bisecting the campus. The Project aims to build upon these already centrally located spaces with additional student support space and student housing closer to the campus core. This would include transforming Trinity Hall into a more student-centered space, carving out additional student support space throughout the existing campus, and providing opportunities for expanded student dining and activities after hours and on weekends. The academic building program would also be updated with nine newly constructed or expanded academic buildings. The Project would generally increase density on underdeveloped sites by demolishing several outdated and inefficient campus buildings and structures (see Figure 4). Multiple existing surface parking lots will also be redeveloped. See Figure 5 for the specific buildings and Table 1 provides a summary of the proposed space allocations.

In addition, there is a potential opportunity area off-campus adjacent to and including 25 and 35 Main Street, University Foundation-owned buildings, across the Esplanade from the main campus. The City of Chico and CSU, Chico are exploring future development opportunities there, which could serve the community and CSU, Chico.

**Housing**: Given the important role student housing plays on a university campus, CSU, Chico has taken a close look at its inventory and program. The current program includes on campus, mostly traditional student housing, as well as a former apartment complex (University Village) a mile and

one-half from the campus core (see Figure 2b). With a phased sequence of housing development, the proposed Master Plan will transform CSU, Chico's student housing to allow freshmen to live more centrally located on campus. This would be accomplished by demolishing the current north campus residence halls (Esken/Mechoopda/Konkow) and densifying the area around Lassen and Shasta Halls, as well as adding additional beds in the southwestern portion of campus. Part of this plan involves the property known as Rio Chico, which is surrounded by the campus and bounded by West 1st Street to the south, Big Chico Creek to the north, Cherry Street to the east and a surface parking lot to the west (see Figure 2a). The Master Plan proposes a public-private partnership project at this location with a private entity to provide additional student housing. The location works well with its proximity to the Wildcat Recreation Center which has plans to expand its services in the area of student life and wellness. University Village would then be used for graduate student and/or student family housing. Student support functions (e.g., dining halls, cafes) and gathering spaces would be located on the first floor of student housing buildings. Overall, the proposed Master Plan would result in a net increase of approximately 1,400 student beds.

**Athletics:** The change in housing locations allows for replacement and expanded athletic fields in the northern most part of campus for academic and recreation sport uses in addition to athletics. This area would also include a 4,000-seat arena/event center for basketball and other events (e.g., convocations, academic conferences, public lectures, and concerts). The event center would incorporate some of the athletics and academic functions currently housed in the existing gymnasiums along Warner Street. The athletics program also includes a new outdoor pool, softball stadium, and a parking structure (discussed in more detail below). These proposed Master Plan changes would provide approximately 4.5 acres of new field space.

**Academic Spaces:** The Master Plan proposes to update and better use academic spaces throughout the campus. The northeast portion of campus is one area that would see a transformation. Currently, this portion of campus contains Aymer J. Hamilton Building, a one-story, former elementary school building, and Modoc Hall, a two story 1960s-era building, both in great need of replacement. The Project would remove both buildings and construct multiple new buildings to house a combination of academics, administration, cultural/museum space, as well as surface parking to service the area. Glenn Hall is another building on campus that requires replacement. Therefore, the proposed Master Plan includes the demolition of Glenn Hall and construction of a new facility on the site.

**Parking**: On-campus surface parking would be replaced in some cases to allow for new buildings. Two new parking garages would be constructed on the northeast and south edges of the campus, and two small surface lots would be constructed on the northwest and northeast sides. Overall, the parking additions and losses would result in a net increase of approximately 310 parking spaces on campus.

**Biking/Pedestrians**: The proposed Master Plan includes the addition of an east-west bike path through campus on the north side of Big Chico Creek. This will align with the City of Chico bike path and will allow bicyclists to ride and park their bikes closer to their destination. The plan will also address the aesthetics of the pedestrian path on the north side of Big Chico Creek in addition to improving safety and visibility for all.

**Project Design Features**: The Project also includes PDFs that are drawn from the Master Plan Guidelines. These PDFs include key planning and design components of the report necessary to ensure successful implementation of the proposed Master Plan. The PDFs include transportation; pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular circulation; parking; transportation demand management measures; open space; water, wastewater, and rain and stormwater collection and management; and energy and sustainability design features. One of the cornerstones of the Master Plan Guidelines is keeping CSU, Chico moving towards the goal of carbon neutrality by 2030. Therefore, sustainability PDFs which support that objective will be included in the EIR. The overall goal is sustainable growth that balances academic mission requirements with greenhouse gas reduction goals.

**TABLE 1**
**PROPOSED MASTER PLAN BUILDING PROGRAM**

| CAMPUS SPACE | AMOUNT | GROSS SQUARE FEET |
|---|---|---|
| EXISTING SPACE | | |
| Non-Residential Campus Buildings | --- | 2,748,920 |
| Student Housing | 2,260 Beds | 528,530 |
| Parking (Structures) | 990 Spaces | 314,210 |
| Parking (Surface) | 1,320 Spaces | |
| *Total Existing Space* | **2,260 Beds, 2,310 Spaces** | **3,591,660** |

| PLANNED SPACE (NEW) | AMOUNT | GROSS SQUARE FEET |
|---|---|---|
| *Future Academic Space (new construction)* | | |
| Academic Buildings (9) | --- | 527,500 |
| *Total Planned Academic Space* | --- | **527,500** |
| *Future Residential Space* | | |
| Student Housing | 1,750 Beds | 555,000 |
| *Total Planned Residential Space* | **1,750 Beds** | **555,000** |
| *Future Shared Space* | | |
| WREC Center Expansion + Wellness Center | --- | 120,000 |
| BMU Expansion (As Part of Mixed Use Building) | --- | 105,000 |
| Neighborhood-Serving Retail | --- | 43,600 |
| Cultural / Museum Building | --- | 10,000 |
| *Total Planned Shared Space* | --- | **278,600** |
| *Future Athletics Space* | | |
| Arena / Events Center | --- | 137,000 |
| Softball Facility | --- | 10,000 |
| Track Seating Replacement | --- | 10,000 |
| *Total Planned Athletics Space* | --- | **157,000** |
| *Future Other Space* | | |
| FMS Office | --- | 25,000 |
| Surface Parking | 200 Spaces | |
| Parking Structures (2) | 1,200 Spaces | 360,000 |
| *Total Planned Other Space* | **1,400 Spaces** | **385,000** |

**TABLE 1 (Cont.)**
**PROPOSED MASTER PLAN BUILDING PROGRAM**

| PLANNED SPACE (REMOVAL) | AMOUNT | GROSS SQUARE FEET |
|---|---|---|
| *Academic Space Removal* | | |
| Glenn Hall | --- | 41,250 |
| Modoc Hall | --- | 35,260 |
| Aymer J. Hamilton Building | --- | 36,860 |
| Plumas Hall Labs | --- | 17,500 |
| *Total Planned Academic Space Removal* | --- | **130,870** |
| *Residential Space Removal* | | |
| Konkow Hall | 107 Beds | 23,930 |
| Esken Hall | 112 Beds | 30,290 |
| Mechoopda Hall | 120 Beds | 30,290 |
| *Total Planned Residential Space Removal* | 339 Beds | **84,510** |
| *Shared Space Removal* | | |
| Selvester's Café | --- | 9,390 |
| Student Health Center | --- | 22,300 |
| Surface Parking | 1,090 Spaces | |
| *Total Planned Shared Space Removal* | 1,090 Spaces | **31,690** |
| *Athletics Space Removal* | | |
| Softball Facility | --- | 5,000 |
| Shurmer Gymnasium | --- | 24,310 |
| Acker Gymnasium (Partial) | --- | 20,000 |
| FMS Office | --- | 5,340 |
| *Total Planned Athletic Space Removal* | --- | **54,650** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| TOTAL PROPOSED CAMPUS SPACE (NEW) | 1,750 beds, 1,400 spaces | 1,903,100 |
| TOTAL PROPOSED CAMPUS SPACE (REMOVAL) | 339 beds, 1,090 spaces | 301,720 |
| TOTAL NET NEW CAMPUS SPACE | 1,411 beds, 310 spaces | 1,601,380 |
| TOTAL CAMPUS SPACE | 3,750 beds, 2,620 spaces | 5,193,040 |

**Potential Environmental Effects:** The following key environmental issues are proposed to be addressed at a program level for the proposed Master Plan and related PDFs. Direct and indirect impacts will be analyzed for the short term (construction) and long term (life of the Project) based on thresholds of significance that meet state statutory and regulatory guidelines and accepted professional standards and practice. Mitigation measures will be identified for impacts determined to be significant. The EIR will include a section that identifies other issues that were found to not result in significant impacts.

Aesthetics. The existing setting of the campus and surrounding area will be described, including scenic views, scenic resources, visual characteristics, and existing sources of light and glare. The EIR will analyze potential aesthetics impacts of the Project on the campus and surrounding areas. If potentially significant visual impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures will be included in the EIR.

Agriculture and Forestry. Agricultural resources are present only on the University Farm. The EIR will consider the potential effects of future development at the University Farm on agricultural resources.

Air Quality. This section of the EIR will be based on estimates of emissions and associated changes in air quality that would be likely to occur as a result of the Project. Pollutants of concern will include criteria pollutants and toxic air contaminants. Emissions associated with Project construction and operation, including mobile sources, will be estimated using the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod). The results will be compared to significance thresholds developed by the Butte County Air Quality Management District. The EIR will also evaluate whether Project activities could lead to potential exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial concentrations of air pollutant emissions. If potentially significant air quality impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures will be included in the EIR.

Biological Resources. The EIR will describe existing biological resources on and in the vicinity of the campus and assess the potential for special-status species and sensitive habitats to occur. A site reconnaissance of the campus and a database and literature review to gather data will be conducted to characterize existing conditions. Although the campus consists largely of built-up urbanized land, there is riparian habitat associated with Big Chico Creek. In addition, the University Farm may provide forage habitat for special-status species. The biological resources section will analyze the impacts of the Project and recommend mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts.

Cultural Resources and Tribal Cultural Resources. This section of the EIR will evaluate the potential for Project development to affect cultural resources, including archaeological, historical, paleontological, and tribal cultural resources. The EIR will use existing documentation, updated records searches, field reconnaissance surveys, and information gathered through tribal consultation to evaluate potential impacts of development accommodated by the Project on cultural resources. Historic-age buildings proposed for demolition or substantial renovation will be evaluated for historical significance. The cultural resources section will analyze impacts of the Project and identify mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts.

Geology/Soils. The topography of the CSU, Chico campus is generally flat, and comprised of both native soils and engineered fill supporting campus buildings and infrastructure. The EIR section will identify faulting and seismic hazards, liquefaction hazards, and soil constraints. The potential for the Project to contribute to seismic risks and erosion will be analyzed. The EIR will evaluate the severity of potential impacts and propose mitigation measures where necessary to avoid or substantially minimize any significant impacts.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions. The EIR will include a setting and background discussion consisting of a summary of the greenhouse effect and global climate change; potential changes to the global climate system and to California; and emission inventories at the national, state, and local levels, including the CSU, Chico GHG emissions inventory and future projections. It will also include a summary of the key regulations at the federal and state levels. The change in GHG emissions resulting from the Project, including construction, operations, energy usage, and transportation, will be estimated using the CalEEMod emissions model. Consistency with the California State University Sustainability Policy and the CSU, Chico Climate Action Plan will be analyzed. Mitigation measures will be identified to reduce potentially significant GHG impacts.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials. This section of the EIR will be based on a current review and evaluation of past and current uses of the subject property for indications of the manufacture, generation, use, storage and/or disposal of hazardous substances, and evaluation of potential soil and/or groundwater

contamination resulting from current and historical land use activities, including those of nearby properties. Demolition will focus on potential asbestos-containing materials, lead-based paint, and potentially contaminated soil. New construction will similarly address the potential for encountering contaminated soil during excavation and grading. Where potentially significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures to reduce impacts will be identified. Impacts related to wildfire will also be considered in the EIR. Note that the campus is not located in a State Responsibility Area or a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone.

Hydrology and Water Quality. Drainage and water quality impacts will be evaluated, considering campus rain and stormwater collection plans and state requirements. The EIR will include a review of the Project's regulatory context, development standards pertaining to water quality, and their applicability to campus improvements. The EIR will include an evaluation of potential effects on the rate, volume, and quality of stormwater runoff based on Project plans. The evaluation will address areas that drain to Big Chico Creek and to the City of Chico's storm drain system. Potential impacts will be identified, and mitigation measures will be identified, where necessary, to avoid or substantially reduce impacts.

Land Use and Planning. The EIR will discuss any conflicts with land use plans, policies, or regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, where such conflicts could cause a significant environmental impact. Although local land use plans and regulations, such as the City of Chico General Plan and Zoning Code, do not apply to CSU, Chico, as a sovereign state agency, relevant policies and codes will be reviewed to determine if the Project would result in conflicts that could cause significant environmental impacts.

Noise and Vibration. This section will include an acoustical analysis evaluating noise impacts upon noise-sensitive land uses within or adjacent to campus, as generated by temporary (construction, demolition) and long-term (Project-generated traffic, parking structures, and other on-site operations) activities associated with the Project. On- and off-site traffic noise impacts associated with Project-generated traffic along the adjoining roads will also be evaluated using Federal Highway Administration models. If significant noise impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures will be developed.

Population and Housing. The EIR will evaluate the Project to determine whether implementation would induce substantial unplanned population growth or displace substantial numbers of existing housing units or people. The EIR will include a quantitative summary of existing on- and off-campus CSU, Chico housing and a description of local population and housing. It is anticipated that the Project would result in a higher number of students housed on campus. If significant housing impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures will be developed.

Public Services and Recreation. Existing conditions related to fire protection, police protection, parks and recreation, and schools will be described, including services provided by CSU, Chico and those provided by other local agencies. The increase in campus population as a result of the Project will be reviewed to determine whether the Project would result in potentially significant impacts to performance levels of these public services that would result in substantial physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities for the provisions of such services. If there are significant impacts associated with any identifiable physical impacts, feasible mitigation measures will be developed.

Transportation and Traffic. A transportation impact study (TIS) will be prepared for the EIR to evaluate potential impacts of the Project on the surrounding transportation system, including roadways, transit service, pedestrian facilities, and bicycle facilities. The TIS will be prepared generally following the guidelines of the California State University (Transportation Impact Study Manual, 2019). The TIS will include analysis of vehicle miles traveled (VMT). If significant transportation impacts are identified, feasible mitigation measures will be developed.

Utilities and Service Systems. The EIR will address water supply, wastewater treatment, solid waste, and electrical and natural gas utility services, including utilities provided by CSU, Chico and those provided by other local agencies. Stormwater drainage utilities will be addressed in the hydrology section of the EIR. The EIR will discuss existing conditions and assess potential impacts related to implementation of the Project. If significant impacts to utility systems are identified, feasible mitigation measures will be developed.

Other CEQA-Required Sections. In accordance with CEQA requirements, cumulative impacts, alternatives, and growth-inducement effects of the Project will be analyzed. Additionally, this section of the EIR will include a discussion of other issues that were found to not result in significant impacts.

**Public Review Period:** The Trustees have issued this NOP for public review and comment pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Sections 15082(a) and 15375. The Trustees have established a 30-day public review and scoping period from **April 29, 2019** to **May 28, 2019,** in accordance with the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR 15082). During this period, the NOP will be available for review online at the following website: https://www.csuchico.edu/fms/announcements/mp-eir.shtml.

The NOP will also be available for review at the following locations during regular business hours for the locations:

Meriam Library at CSU, Chico
Special Collections, Room 305
400 West First Street
Chico, California 95929

Butte County Library
Chico Branch
1108 Sherman Avenue
Chico, California 95926

**Scoping Comments:** At this time, the Trustees are soliciting comments on the scope and content of the EIR. Comments may be submitted by mail or email, or by attending the Public Scoping Meeting (see details below) and submitting a written comment. All comments should indicate a contact person for your agency or organization, if applicable. All comments should be sent to the following address, to arrive no later than 5:00 p.m. on **May 28, 2019**:

Jenna L. Wright
Senior Capital Planner/Financial Manager
California State University, Chico
400 West First Street
Chico, California 95926-0925
T: 530-898-3548
jlwright@csuchico.edu

**Public Scoping Meetings:** The Board of Trustees will hold two Scoping Meetings to give the public an opportunity to receive more information on the Project, and to provide written comments and suggestions on the scope of the EIR. All members of the public and interested persons are welcome to attend and provide written comments. The details of these meetings are as follows:

**Date:** Monday, May 6, 2019

**Time:** 3:00 to 4:30p.m and 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** Colusa Hall, Room 100A/B

**Visitor & Travel Information:** https://www.csuchico.edu/directions/index.shtml

**Campus Map:** https://www.csuchico.edu/maps/campus/

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** For environmental review information or questions about the Project, please contact Jenna L. Wright at 530-898-3548 or jlwright@csuchico.edu.

4/29/19

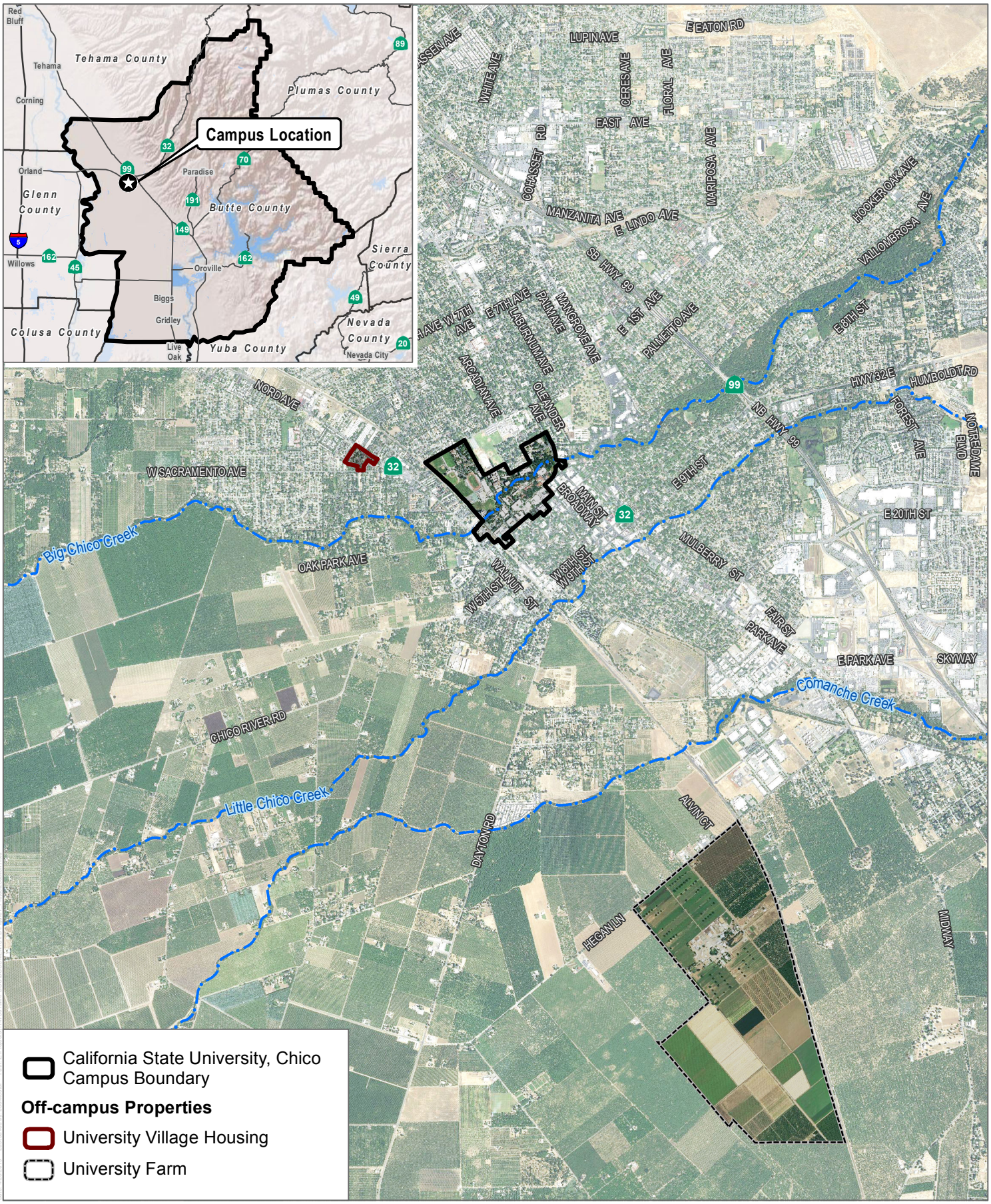
Michael A. Guzzi
Associate Vice President of Facilities and Capital Projects
California State University, Chico

Date

4/29/19

Ann Sherman
Vice President for Business and Finance
California State University, Chico

Date




SOURCE: USDA 2016, USGS 2018, County of Butte 2018, CSU, Chico 2019

DUDEK

0 2,000 4,000 Feet

**FIGURE 1**

Project Location

California State University, Chico Master Plan EIR

SOURCE: USDA 2016, USGS 2018, County of Butte 2018, CSU, Chico 2019

DUDEK

0 355 710 Feet

**FIGURE 2A**

CSU, Chico Campus

California State University, Chico Master Plan EIR

SOURCE: USDA 2016, USGS 2018, County of Butte 2018, CSU, Chico 2019

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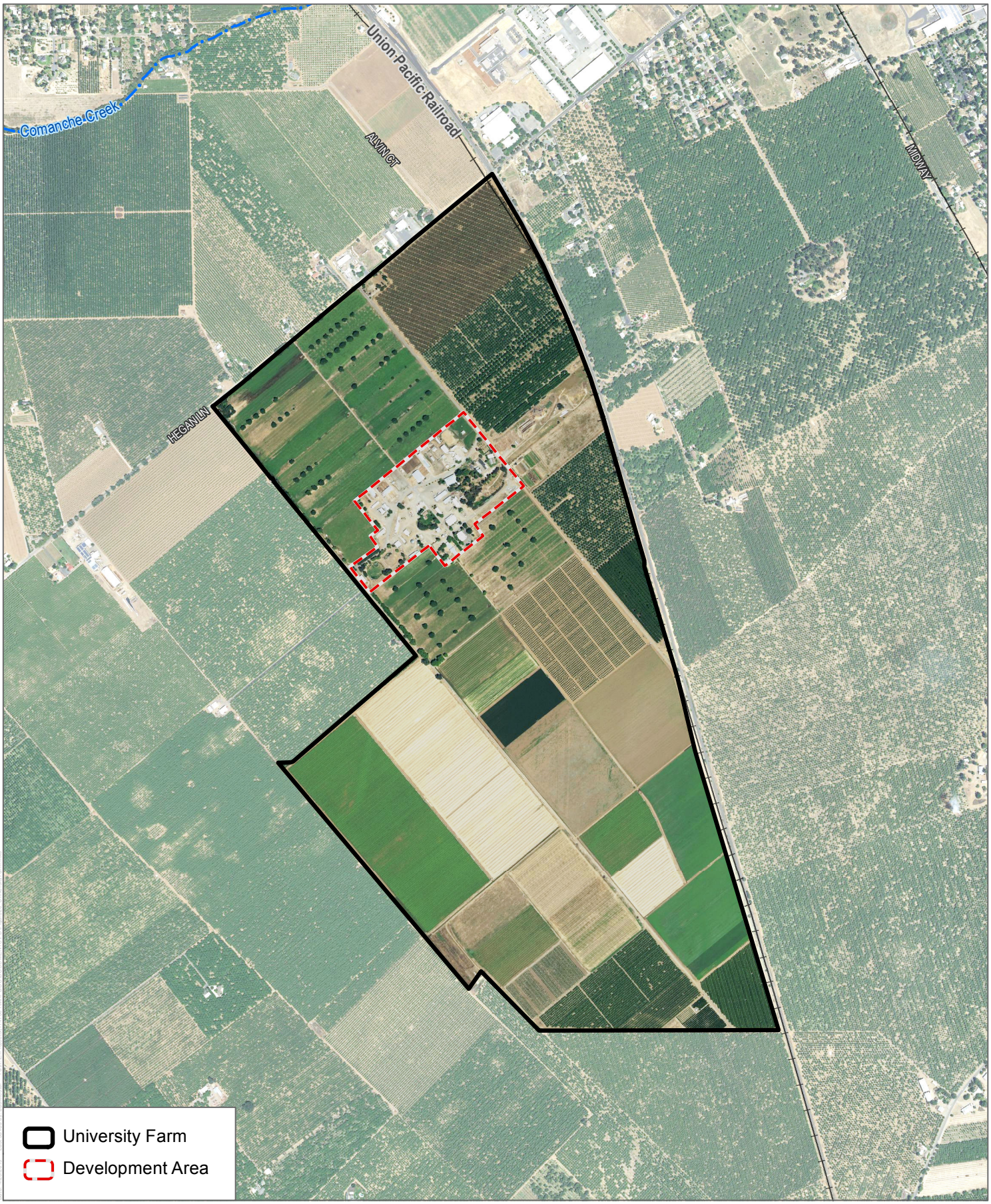
0 300 600 Feet

**FIGURE 2B**

University Village

California State University, Chico Master Plan EIR




SOURCE: USDA 2016, USGS 2018, County of Butte 2018, CSU, Chico 2019

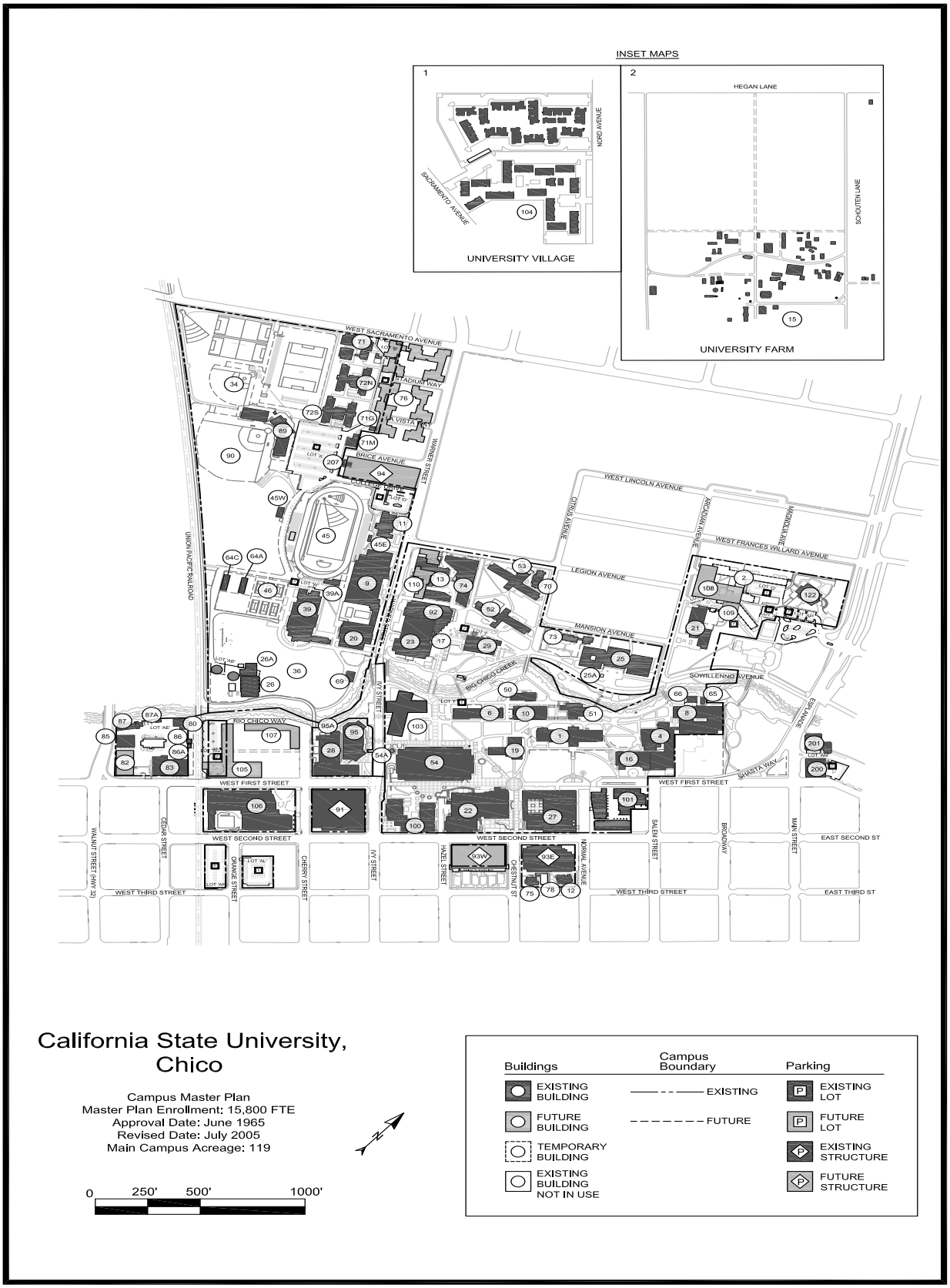
DUDEK

0 750 1,500 Feet

**FIGURE 2C**

University Farm

California State University, Chico Master Plan EIR




SOURCE: CSU, Chico 2018

**FIGURE 3**

Existing Master Plan

California State University, Chico Master Plan EIR

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# PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

## DEMOLITION

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

1. Konkow Hall
2. Mechoopda Hall
3. Esken Hall
4. Student Health Center
5. Shurmer Gymnasium
6. Plumas Hall Labs
7. Glenn Hall
8. Selvester's Cafe
9. Modoc Hall
10. Aymer J. Hamilton Building
11. FMS Office
12. Softball Stadium

4/25/2019

SOURCE: CSU, Chico 2018

DUDEK

**FIGURE 4**

Preliminary Master Plan Demolition

California State University, Chico Master Plan EIR

California State University, Chico
Campus Master Plan

# PRELIMINARY MASTER PLAN

## NEW CONSTRUCTION

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

1. Softball Stadium
2. Surface Parking
3. Parking Garage
4. Arena / Classroom / Support
5. Academic Building
6. Butte Hall Addition
7. Student Housing
8. Student Housing
9. Academic Building
10. Holt Hall Addition
11. Academic Building
12. Academic Building
13. Surface Parking
14. Cultural / Museum Building
15. Academic Building
16. Mixed Use Building
17. Student Housing
18. Student Housing
19. Student Life / Wellness Building
20. Academic Building
21. Support Building
22. Student Housing
23. Student Housing
24. Academic Building

4/25/2019

SOURCE:CSU, Chico 2018

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**FIGURE 5**

Preliminary Master Plan New Construction

California State University, Chico Master Plan EIR