

Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health and Safety

ALBERTO M. CARVALHO
Superintendent of Schools

CARLOS A. TORRES
Director, Environmental Health and Safety

JENNIFER FLORES
Deputy Director, Environmental Health and Safety

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

THIS NOTICE WAS POSTED
ON November 22 2024
UNTIL December 23 2024
REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2024 240854

FILED
Nov 22 2024
Dear C. Logan, Registrar – Recorder/County Clerk
Electronically signed by TODD TRAM

To: County Clerk and Registrar-Recorder
County of Los Angeles
12400 Imperial Highway
Norwalk, CA 90650

From: LA Unified OEHS
333 S. Beaudry Avenue
21st Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Project Title:

Pacoima Middle School Underground Piping Replacement Project

Project Location – Specific:

The Pacoima Middle School Underground Piping Replacement Project (Project) will be located on the 21.8-acre Pacoima Middle School campus (Pacoima MS or Campus). The Campus is located at 9919 Laurel Canyon Boulevard in the Pacoima community of the City of Los Angeles. It is bound by Laurel Canyon Boulevard to the north, Kagal Canyon Street to the east, and Cranford Avenue to the south and Terra Bella Street to the west. The Project will occur throughout the Campus. The Campus is located in an urbanized community primarily consisting of commercial uses, multi-family, and single-family residences.

Project Location – City:

Los Angeles

Project Location – County:

Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Project will replace deteriorated underground water supply, sewer, and storm drainpipes that serve the entire Campus, as well as replace fire sprinkler, gas, and irrigation lines. The pipes were originally installed in the 1950s and have reached the end of their useful life. The Project includes abandoning all existing underground piping, providing new underground water and sewer piping, and testing/commissioning of the entire system.

The Project will be implemented per all applicable local and State regulations, as well as all District Standards and Specifications; such as those provided in LAUSD's Program Environmental Impact Report



for the School Upgrade Program (Program EIR) as adopted by the Board of Education in February 2019.¹ LAUSD's Standard Conditions of Approval (SCs), design guidelines, and best management practices are designed to be incorporated into the Project design in order to avoid or limit potential adverse impacts associated with the District's Projects. The primary purpose of the Project is to upgrade the Campus's water infrastructure. The beneficiaries of the Project include the Pacoima MS students, faculty, staff, families, school supporters, and the community at large who may request access to the facilities and grounds of the Campus pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Section 38130-38139).

Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:

Los Angeles Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

Los Angeles Unified School District

Exempt Status: (check one below)

- Ministerial [Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines Section 15268²]:
- Declared Emergency [PRC Section 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(a)]:
- Emergency Project [PRC Section 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(b)(c)]:
- Categorical Exemption (PRC Section 21084; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15300 - 15333):
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities*
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction*
- Statutory Exemption:

Reasons why project is exempt:

Section 15301 Existing Facilities

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

Implementation of the proposed Project would replace deteriorated underground piping systems with a new in-kind system throughout the Campus. The Project components would not present a new or expanded use of the Project site. Therefore, the Project constitutes minor alterations to an existing LAUSD campus that results in no expansion of use and meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Section 15302 Replacement or Reconstruction

Class 2 consists of replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

The installation of the new water and sewer piping will replace the existing system and replace fire sprinkler, gas, and irrigation lines. The Project would not result in an increase or alteration of the current

¹ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on February 5, 2019.

² CEQA Guidelines can be found at California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 – Section 15387



use, function, or capacity of the existing Campus. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15302.

Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of health, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.

The proposed project would replace underground water, sewer, and storm drainpipes that serve the entire Campus, in conjunction with fire water, gas, and irrigation lines. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15304.

Section 15300.2 – Exceptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines, Exceptions, provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. Review of the project indicates that construction and implementation would not violate any of the exceptions, as described below.

1. *The projects would occur in certain specified sensitive environments or locations;*

The Project site is a fully developed Campus within an urbanized community.³ The site is not designated as biologically sensitive location. The nearest significant ecological area (SEA) is the Tujunga Valley/Hansen Dam, located approximately 1.4 miles to the east of the Project site.⁴ The nearest critical habitat is the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher located approximately 2.1 miles northeast of the Project site.^{5,6} The Project would occur entirely within the limits of the existing Campus and underneath areas that are currently paved. As such, the Project will not impact sensitive environments or locations.

2. *Cumulative impacts would be considerable because successive projects of the same type would occur at the same place over time;*

The Campus is an active school site and there will likely be ongoing maintenance activities and minor projects on the Campus to keep the school operational. There are currently no known successive projects of the same type of scale planned for the Campus. As the Project would not result in any lasting impacts once construction of the Project is complete, the Project would not contribute to cumulative impacts when considered with expected successive projects. Therefore, no cumulative impacts will result from the Project and successive projects of the same type and at the same place over time.

3. *There is a reasonable possibility that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

There are no known unusual circumstances that would have a significant effect on the environment. The Project does not include the removal of trees. Should the Project be altered to include the

³ City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, <http://zimas.lacity.org/>, accessed October 2024.

⁴ United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> accessed October 2024.

⁵ United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> accessed October 2024.

⁶ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed October 2024.



removal of trees, LAUSD’s Office of Environmental Health & Safety (OEHS) must be notified immediately. District policy requires consultation with an arborist to determine if the trees are a protected native species. All tree trimming and removal conducted on District property is required to adhere to the procedures described in the LAUSD OEHS Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure.⁷ Additionally, written approval from the school principal will be required before any trees can be removed. If tree removal is scheduled to occur between February 1 and August 31, a nesting bird survey would be performed prior to removal activities, per standard condition (SC) of approval SC-BIO-3.⁸

The Project will include minor ground-disturbing activities. These activities are not considered unusual circumstances for the classes of projects under which an exemption is claimed. Nevertheless, consideration must be given to the management of pavement removal and excavated soils associated with earthwork activities for the Project. As the Project involves the removal of pavement, soil sampling and testing for characterization is required prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. If construction or earthmoving activities require import or export of soils and materials, OEHS must be notified to provide oversight to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the requirements of District Specification 01 4524, relevant provisions of South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1466, and other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.⁹ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-6, SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-10, and SC-GEO-2, construction activities must be stopped immediately and OEHS notified upon discovery of subsurface features, such as buried resources (i.e., paleontological resources, archaeological resources), tanks or seepage pits, or stained/odoriferous soils.¹⁰ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1.¹¹ Therefore, the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

4. *The project may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway;*

The closest designated state scenic highway to the Project site is Angeles Crest Highway, which is located approximately 13.6 miles east of the Project site.¹² In addition, the Project will not result in the removal of historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or other scenic resources. Therefore, the Project will not result in damage to scenic resources or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway.

5. *The project is located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code; or*

⁷ LAUSD OEHS, “Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure,” <https://www.lausd.org/ceqa>

⁸ LAUSD OEHS, “School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report,” <https://www.lausd.org/CEQA>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

⁹ LAUSD OEHS, “Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing,” http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

¹⁰ LAUSD OEHS, “School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report,” <https://www.lausd.org/CEQA>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed October 2024.



The Project site is not located on sites that are included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.¹³ Therefore, the Project will have no impacts related to being located on a hazardous waste site.

6. *The project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.*

Pacoima MS is over 45 years old, meeting LAUSD's threshold for review as potential historic resources and requiring an evaluation for historic eligibility. LAUSD has identified Pacoima MS as eligible for listing as a historic resource per Section 18955 of the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC).¹⁴ The scope of the Project is focused on the removal and replacement of underground water, sewer and storm drainpipes that serve the entire Campus, in conjunction with fire sprinkler, gas and irrigation lines. These elements of the Project are not considered character-defining features. Therefore, OEHS' Historic Preservation Specialist has determined that the Project will not materially impair the significance of the historic resource and therefore will not cause a substantial adverse historic impact.

Should the scope of the Project activities be altered from the components that are described above, standard LAUSD procedure requires that OEHS must be notified immediately to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the *Secretary's Standards* and would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Prepared By:

Zulema Renteria
Environmental Planning Specialist

Phone and Email:

(213) 241-3432
zulema.renteria@LAUSD.net

Signed by:

Date:

Carlos A. Torres,
CEQA Officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District

Attachment: Exhibit A – Site Plan

¹³ http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed October 2024.

¹⁴ State of California. 2003. State Historical Building Code, Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 2.7, Section 18955. Available at: http://www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/AboutUs/shbsb/shbsb_health_safety.aspx. Also see California Building Standards Commission. 2014. California Code of Regulations, Title 24, California Historical Building Code, Section 8-101.2. Washington, DC. p. 4.

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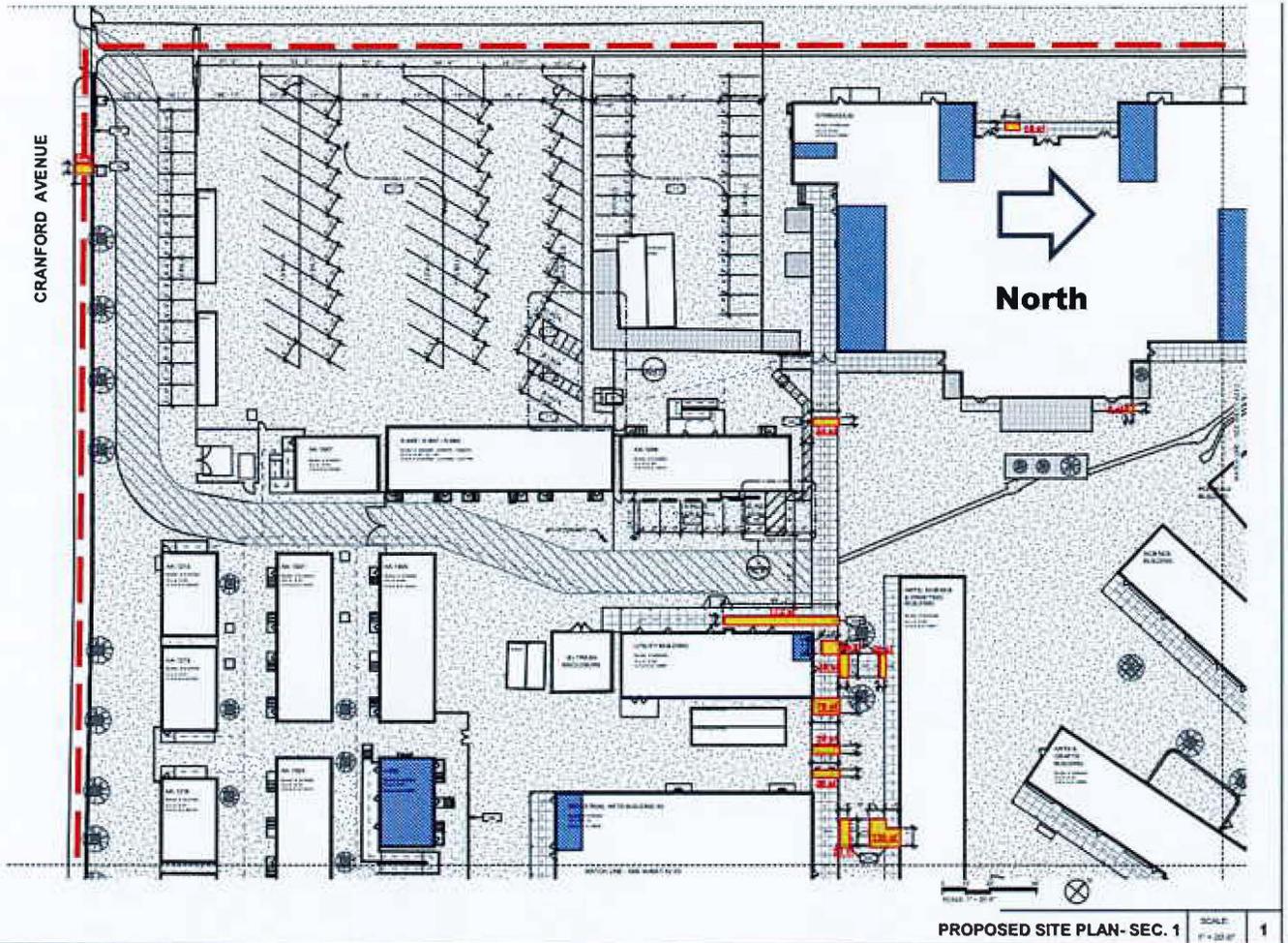


Figure 1. Proposed Site Plan: Cranford Avenue (South Side of Campus)

 PROJECT SITE

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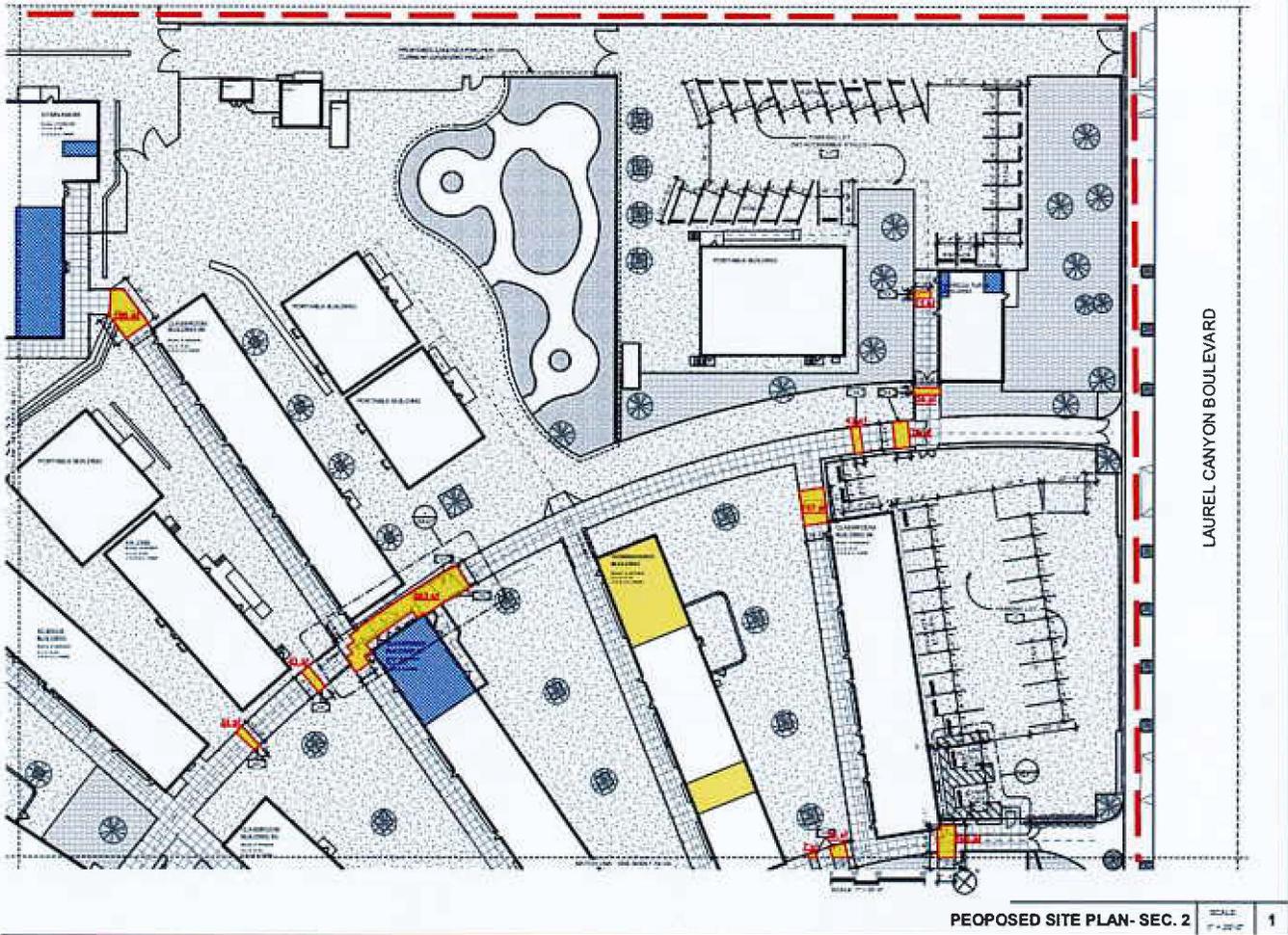


Figure 2. Proposed Site Plan: Laurel Canyon Boulevard (North Side of Campus)

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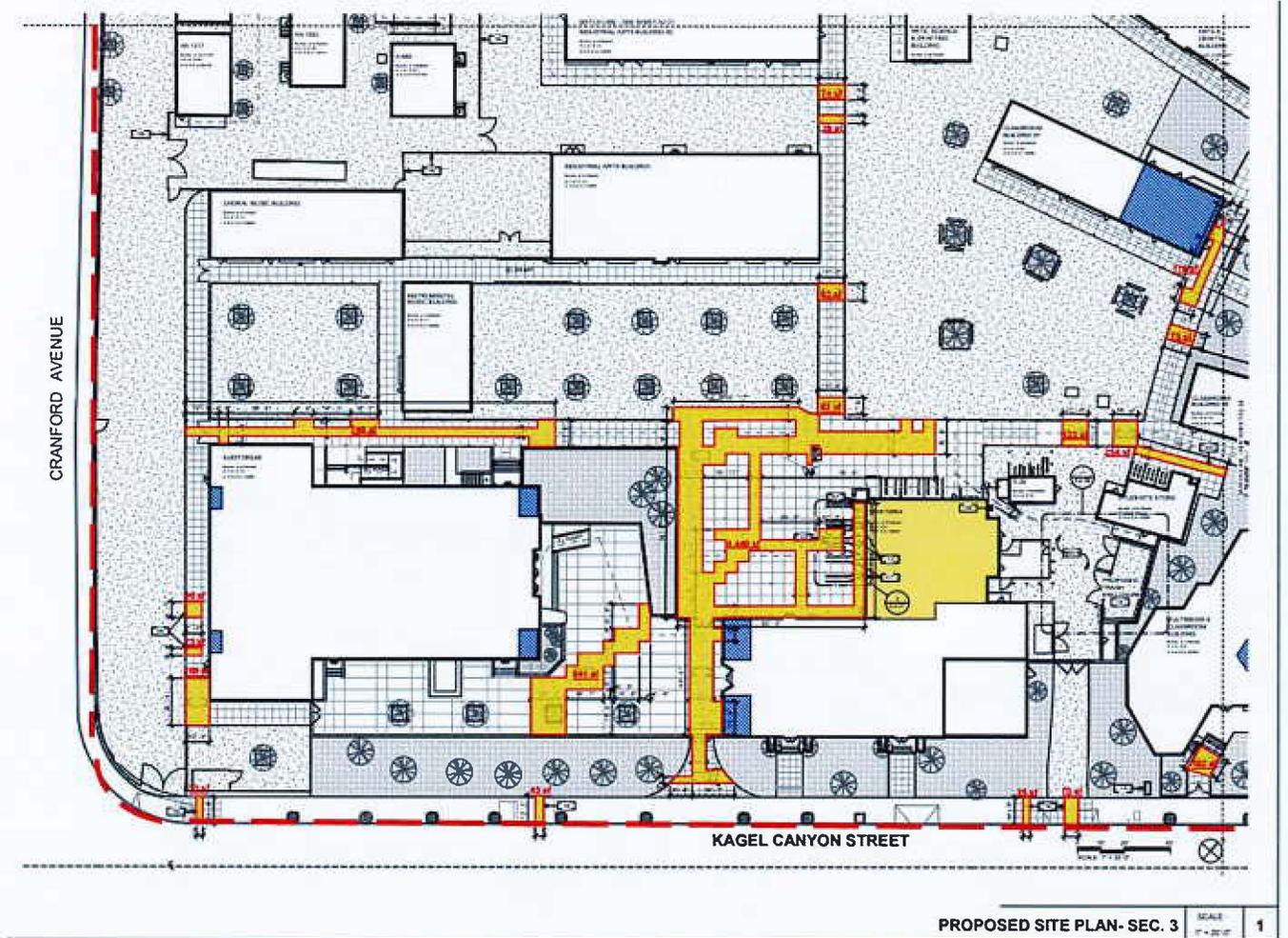


Figure 3. Proposed Site Plan: Kagel Canyon Street (East Side of Campus)

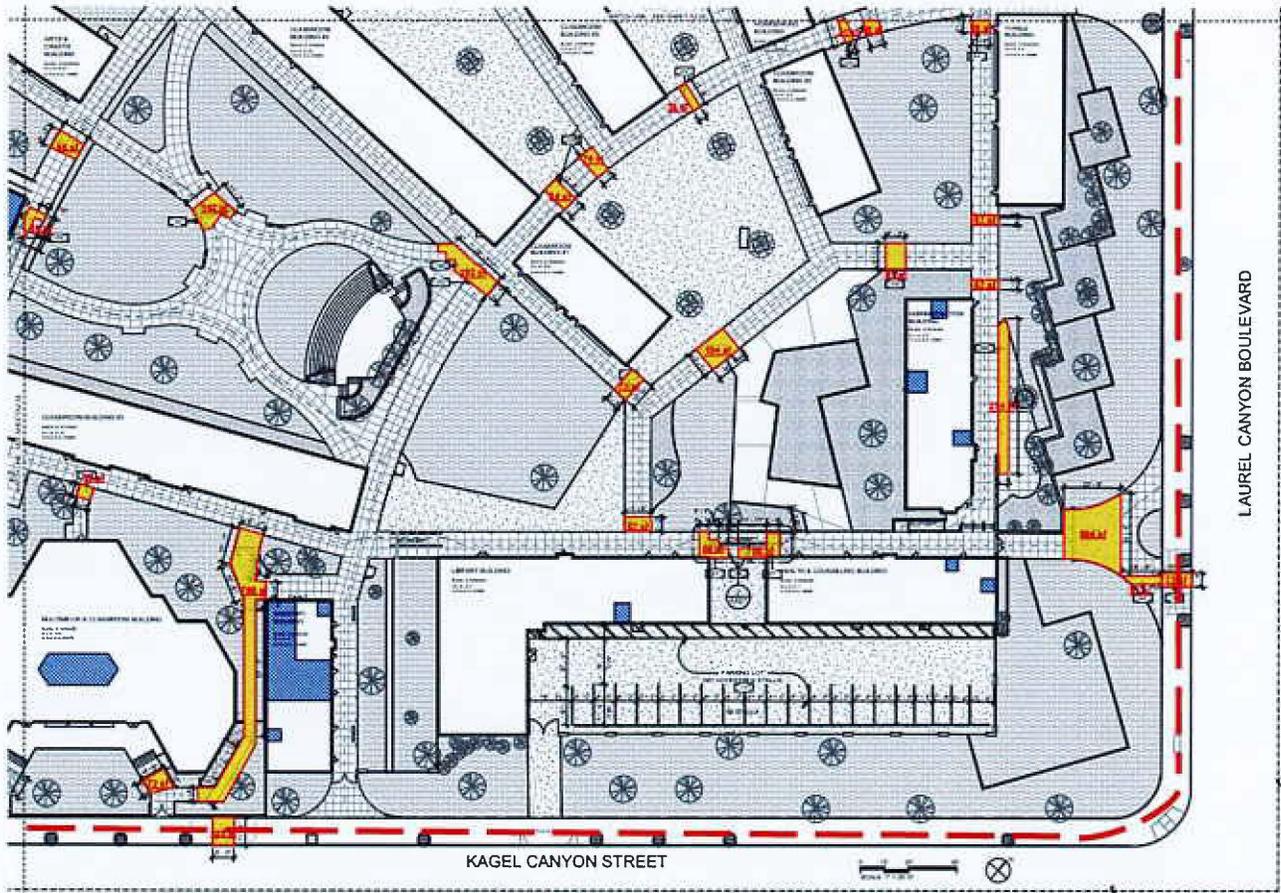
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PROPOSED SITE PLAN- SEC. 4 SCALE 1/8"=1'-0" 1

Figure 4. Proposed Site Plan: Kagel Canyon Street (East Side of Campus)