

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 July 23 2024
UNTIL August 22 2024
REGISTRAR - RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2024 154765

FILED
Jul 23 2024
Dean C. Logan, Registrar - Recorder/County Clerk
Electronically signed by SAVANNAH RODRIGUEZ

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

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

Project Title:

Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) Greening Project at Thirteen (13) Los Angeles Unified Campuses

Project Location - Specific:

1. 28th Street Elementary School, 2807 Stanford Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90011
2. Alta Loma Elementary School, 1745 Vineyard Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90019
3. Breed Street Elementary School, 2226 E. Third Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033
4. Evergreen Avenue Elementary School, 2730 Ganahl Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033
5. Garden Grove Elementary School, 18141 Valerio Street, Reseda, CA 91335
6. Hoover Street Elementary School, 2726 Francis Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90005
7. La Salle Avenue Elementary School, 8715 La Salle Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90047
8. Lankershim Elementary School, 5250 Bakman Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 91601
9. Menlo Avenue Elementary School, 4156 Menlo Avenue, Los Angeles, 90037
10. Soto Street Elementary School, 1020 S. Soto Street, Los Angeles, CA 90023
11. Stanford Avenue Elementary School, 2833 Illinois Avenue, South Gate, CA 90280
12. Sunny Brae Avenue Elementary School, 20620 Arminta Street, Winnetka, CA 91306
13. Woodcrest Elementary School, 1151 W. 109th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90044

Project Location - City:
Various

Project Location - County:
Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) provides funding for afterschool enrichment programs for K-6th grades. The District has allocated \$40 million in funding in Fiscal Year 2024 from this program to spend on trees and greening projects. The Project scope consists of the design and construction

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*Our Mission: To ensure a safe and healthy environment for students to learn, teachers to teach, and employees to work.
Our Vision: To eliminate all environmental health and safety risks at schools.*

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of outdoor learning spaces including installation of trees, plants, natural turf, and decomposed granite. The Project will be individually designed on each Campus, but will include a mix of the following components:

- New trees and landscape in existing tree wells/planting areas/grass field (existing irrigation)
- New trees and landscape in existing tree wells/planting areas with new irrigation
- New grass field surrounded by trees with irrigation
- New planting area with trees and irrigation surrounding existing asphalt
- New planting area with trees and irrigation surrounding new decomposed granite

The table below describes the components of the Project proposed for each Campus:

School	Planting (Shrubs)	Trees	Turf	Decomposed Granite	Asphalt Removal
28th St. ES	X	X	X	X	X
Alta Loma ES	X	X	X	--	X
Breed St. ES	X	X	X	--	X
Evergreen Ave. ES	X	X	X	X	--
Garden Grove ES	X	X	X	X	X
Hoover St. ES	X	X	X	X	X
La Salle Ave. ES	X	X	X	X	X
Lankershim ES	X	X	X	X	X
Menlo Ave. ES	X	X	X	X	X
Soto St. ES	X	X	X	X	X
Stanford Ave. ES	X	X	X	X	X
Sunny Brae Ave. ES	X	X	X	X	X
Woodcrest ES	X	X	X	X	X

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 Los Angeles Unified's (LA Unified) Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report for the School Upgrade Program (Subsequent PEIR).¹ The primary purpose of the Project is to provide outdoor learning experiences, as well as provide upgrades to school building/site systems that have reached or exceeded their service life. The Project will not cause an increase in student capacity or enrollment and would not result in an increase in the intensity of use. The beneficiaries of the Project include students and staff at each of the respective schools and the community at large who may request access to the facilities and grounds of the Campuses pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130 - 38139).

Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:

Los Angeles Unified School District

¹ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR)," <https://www.lausd.org/ccqa>, adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.



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 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land*
- 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.

Construction of the Project will result in the planting of new trees and shrubs on improved ground surface areas of existing Campuses. As such, the Project would constitute operation, repair, maintenance, and minor alteration of existing public facilities involving no expansion of the facilities' use.

All proposed Project components would involve minor alterations to existing campuses and will occur within the area occupied by existing facilities at each Campus. The Project components will not present a new or expanded use of the Campuses. Therefore, the Project constitutes minor alterations to existing school sites that result in no expansion of use and meets the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

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 the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes.

The Project will involve minor alterations to land including the removal of existing asphalt and planting of new trees and shrubs on improved ground surface areas of existing Campuses. As such, removal of trees will not be required as a part of the Project. The Project will include the installation of new vegetation, irrigation, and decomposed granite as part of the ELOP Projects. Therefore, the Project meets 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 these Projects indicates that they would not violate any of the exceptions, as described below.

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

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

The Project site is located within fully developed Campuses within urbanized communities.³ None of the Campuses have been designated as biologically sensitive locations. The nearest threatened or endangered species is the Braunton's Milk-vetch located approximately four miles west of Sunny Brae Avenue Elementary School. The nearest sensitive environment to the Project site is the Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills Significant Ecological Area located approximately 2 miles west of Sunny Brae Avenue Elementary School.^{4,5} 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 Campuses are active school sites and there will likely be ongoing maintenance activities and minor Project to keep them operational. There are currently no known successive projects of the same type or scale planned for any one of the Campuses. 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 upgrades associated with the Project are comparable to other modernizations and improvements that are being completed throughout the District under the School Upgrade Program. The removal of trees is not anticipated as part of the proposed scope of work. However, should the Project be altered to include the removal of trees, LA Unified'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. 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 of the Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects.⁶

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. All Project related ground disturbing activities would comply with SC-AQ-1, SC-AQ-2, SC-AQ-3, and SC-AQ-4. As the Project involves the removal of pavement, soil sampling and testing has or will be

³ Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG), *2019 Annual Land Use (ALU v.2019.2)*, <https://arcgis/1SqNkm>, accessed April 2024.

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

⁵ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, https://rpgis.isd.lacounty.gov/Html5Viewer/index.html?viewer=GISNET_Public.GIS-NET_Public, accessed April 2024.

⁶ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," available at https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/135/ceqa/2023_Standard_Conditions_UPDATE_Final.pdf.



conducted and a determination memorandum will be created for all Campuses prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. Excavated soils will only be reused onsite if they are placed beneath paved areas. 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.⁷ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-9, SC-CUL-10, and SC-CUL-11 and in District protocols, 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.⁸ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1.⁹ 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 is the Angeles Crest Scenic Byway, which is located approximately 9.4 miles south of Garden Grove Elementary School.¹⁰ Therefore, the proposed 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*

None of the Project sites are located on sites that are included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.¹¹ 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.*

Six campuses (Alta Loma Elementary School, Breed Street Elementary School, Lankershim Elementary School, Menlo Avenue Elementary School, Soto Avenue Elementary School, and Sunny Brae Elementary School) have been determined to be eligible to be listed on the California Register of Historical Resources and apart from Breed Street Elementary School, are also eligible to be listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. The Project entails landscaping and irrigation in areas on the grounds of existing campuses and will not affect any existing structures. The proposed modifications are limited to spaces that are not considered character-defining and will comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation due to their compatibility and reversibility. The Project was reviewed by LA Unified's Historic Preservation Specialist and Coordinator to ensure compliance with

⁷ LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, https://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html. Accessed January 2024.

¹¹ California Department of Toxic Substances Control. DTSC Databases. Available at: <https://dtsc.ca.gov/dtscs-cortese-list/>. Accessed January 2024.

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the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Secretary's Standards) and LA Unified's Design Guidelines and Treatment Approaches for Historic Schools (Guidelines). The Historical Preservation Specialist and Coordinator has determined that the Project complies with the Secretary's Standards and LA Unified's Guidelines, meets the requirements specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3), and will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource. Therefore, the Project will not have the potential to adversely impact historical resources.

Prepared By:

Bryan Ramos Fernandez, AICP
CEQA Project Manager/Contract Professional

Phone and Email:

(213) 241-4210
cp-bryan.fernandez@LAUSD.net

Signed by:

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

Date:

7/16/24

Attachment: Exhibit A – Site Plans

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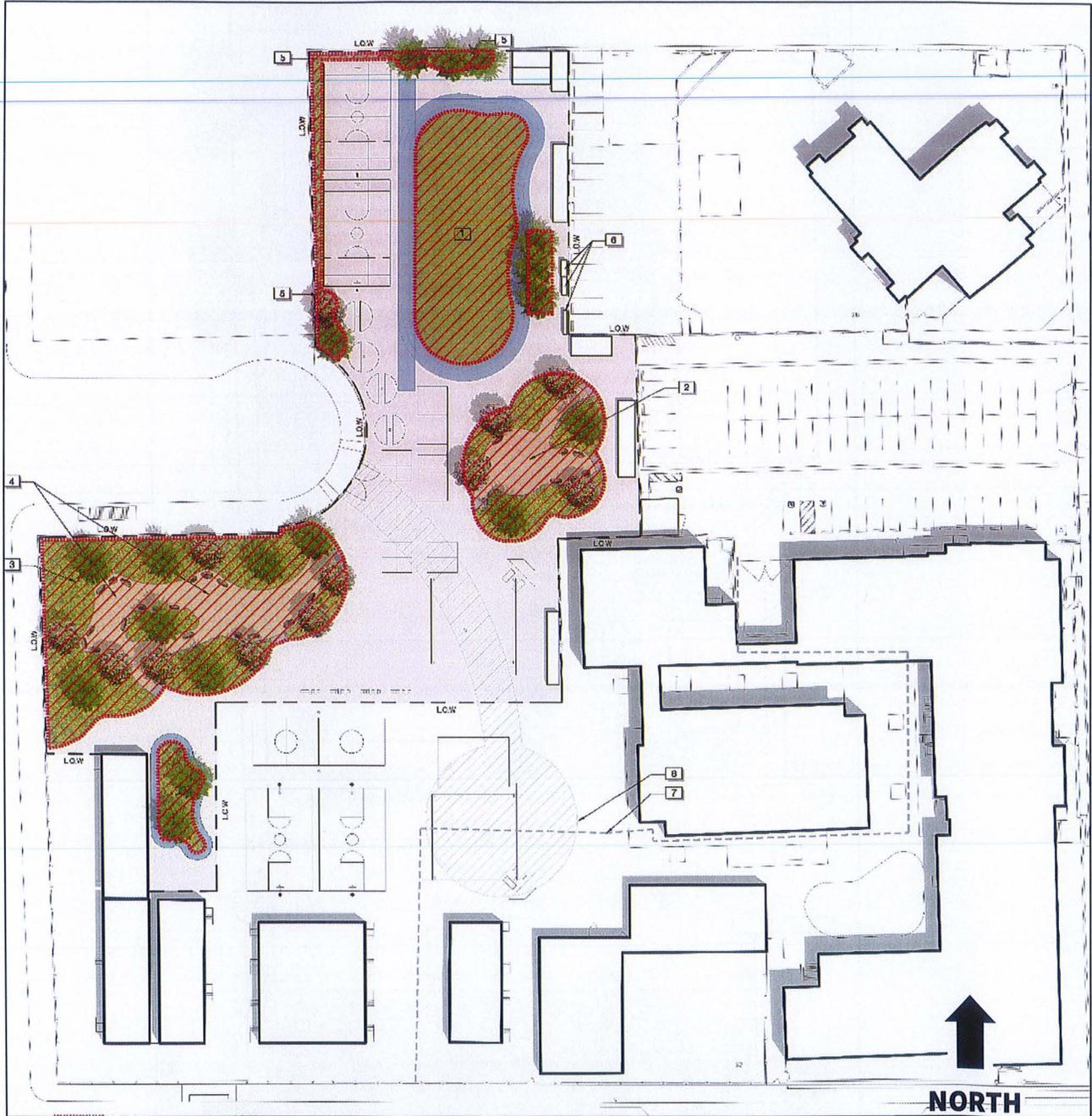


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EXHIBIT A - 28th STREET ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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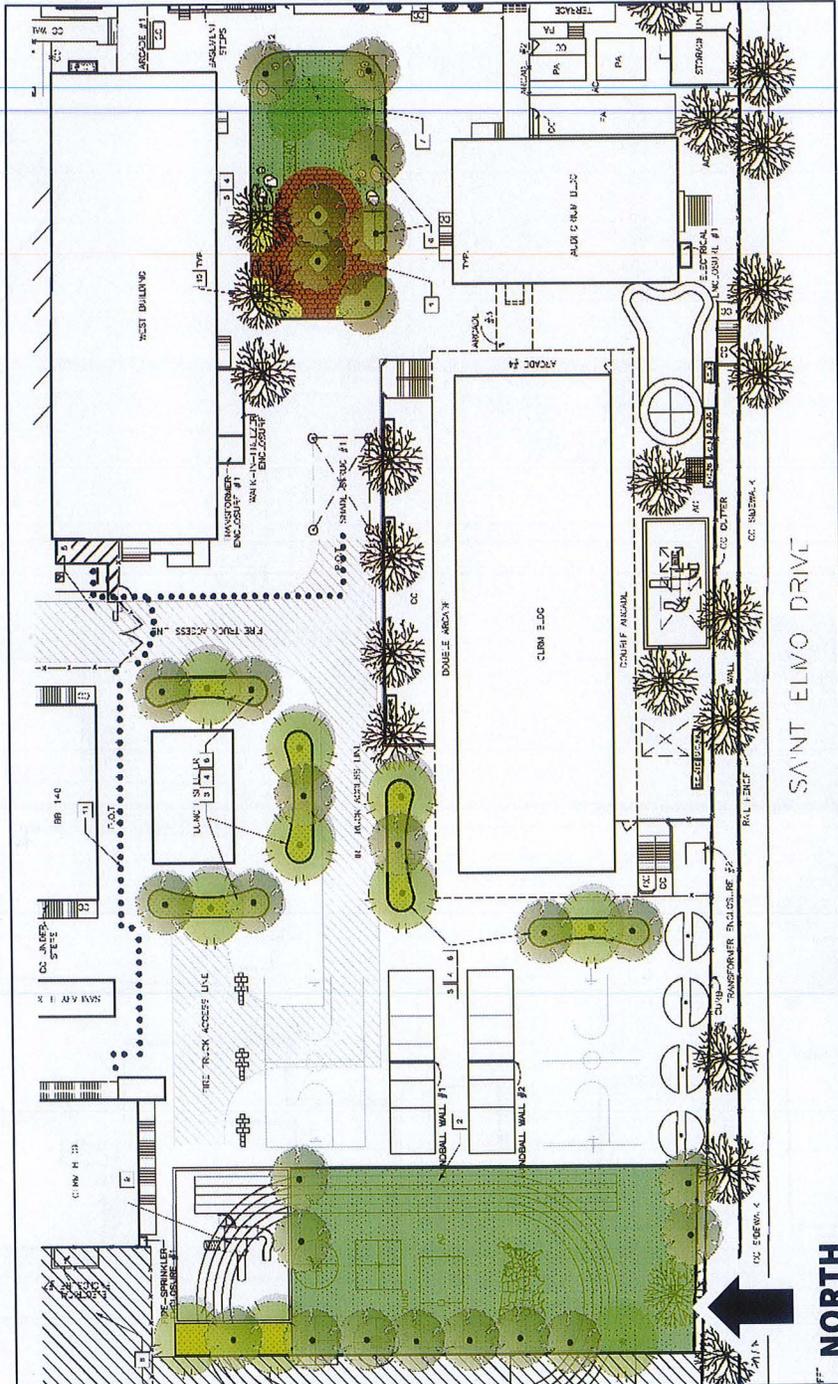


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EXHIBIT A - ALTA LOMA ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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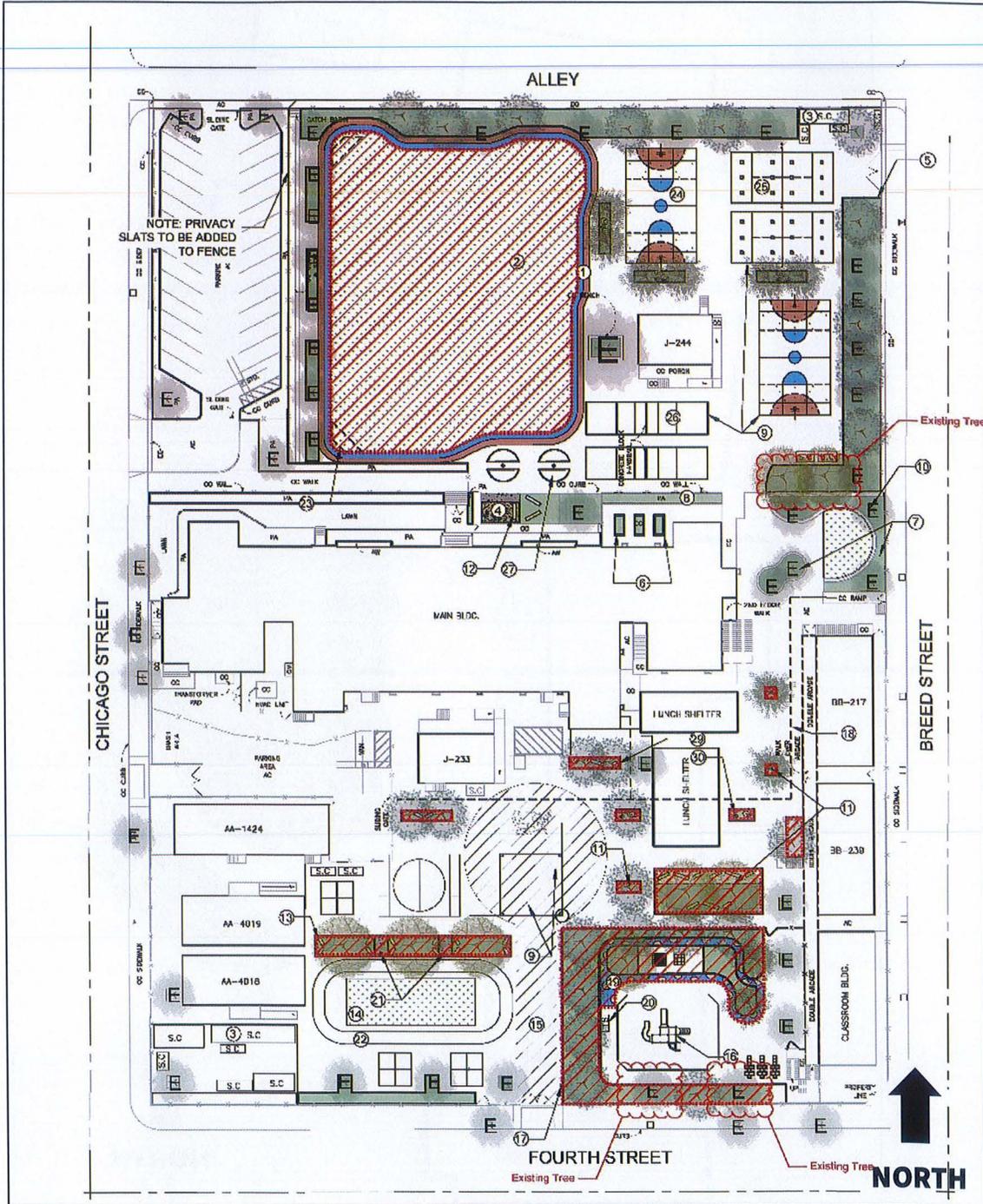


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EXHIBIT A - BREED STREET ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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EXHIBIT A – EVERGREEN AVENUE ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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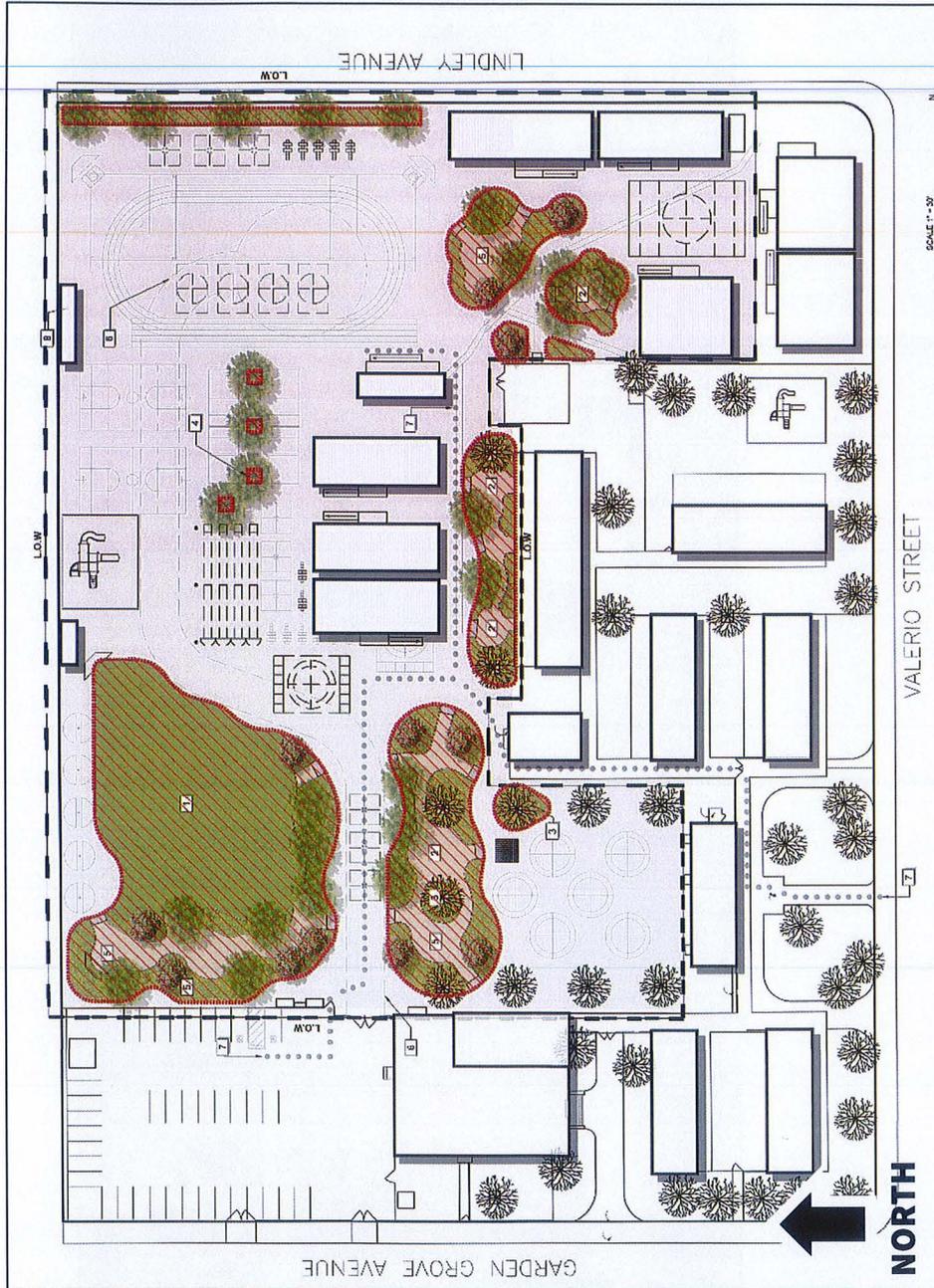
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EXHIBIT A - GARDEN GROVE ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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EXHIBIT A – LA SALLE ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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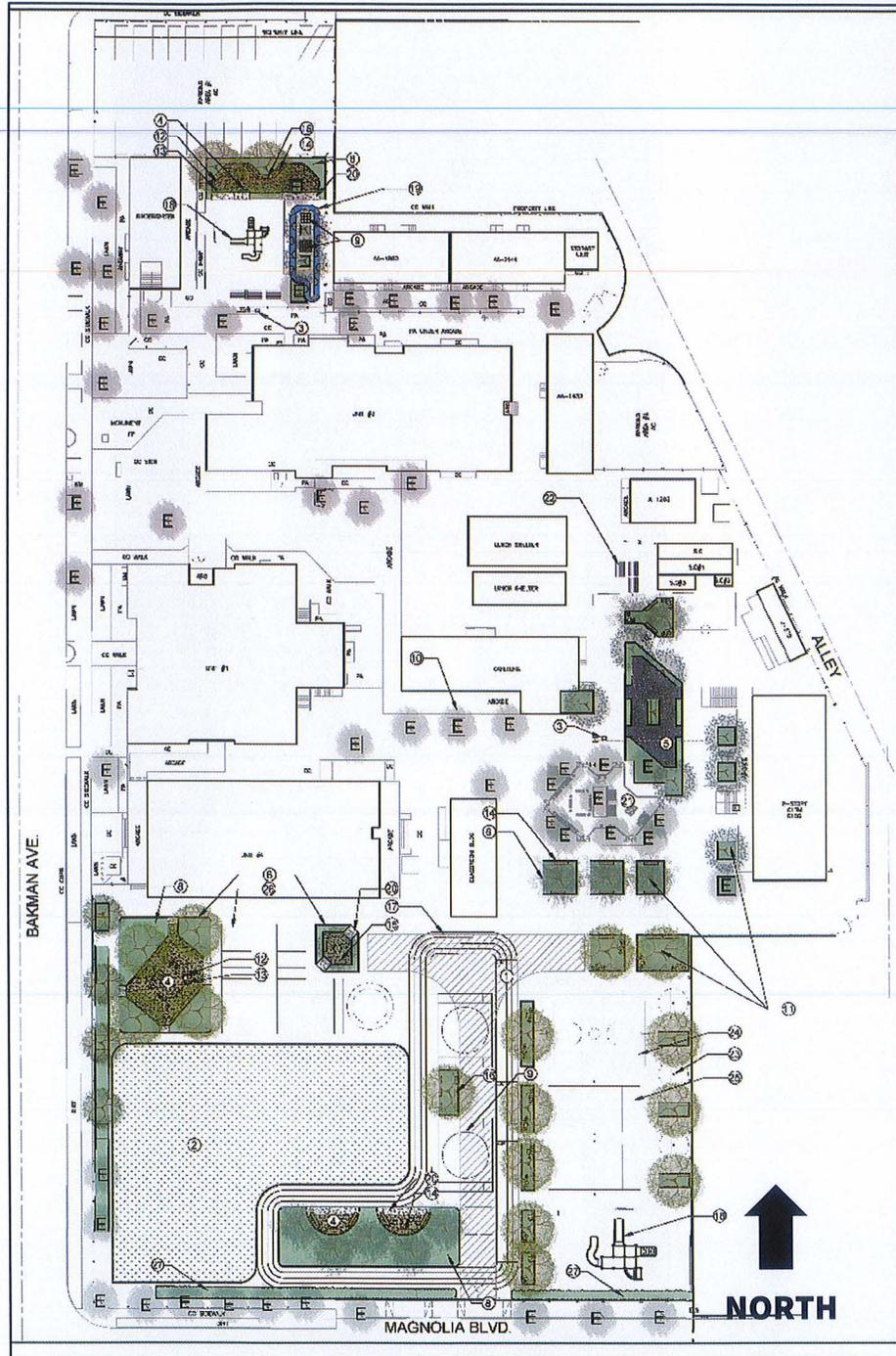


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EXHIBIT A - LANKERSHIM ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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EXHIBIT A – MENLO AVENUE ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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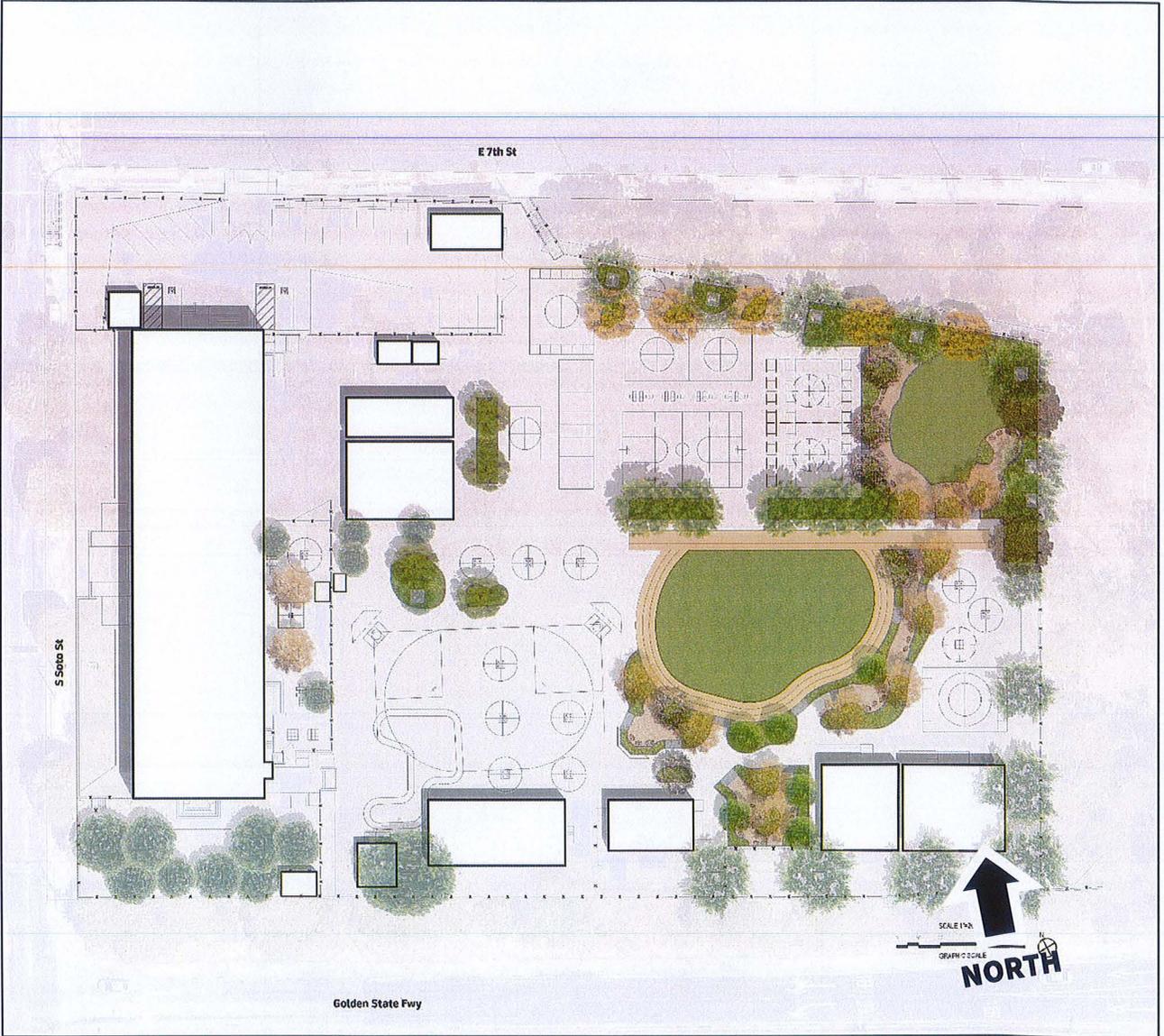


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EXHIBIT A – SOTO STREET ES CAMPUS SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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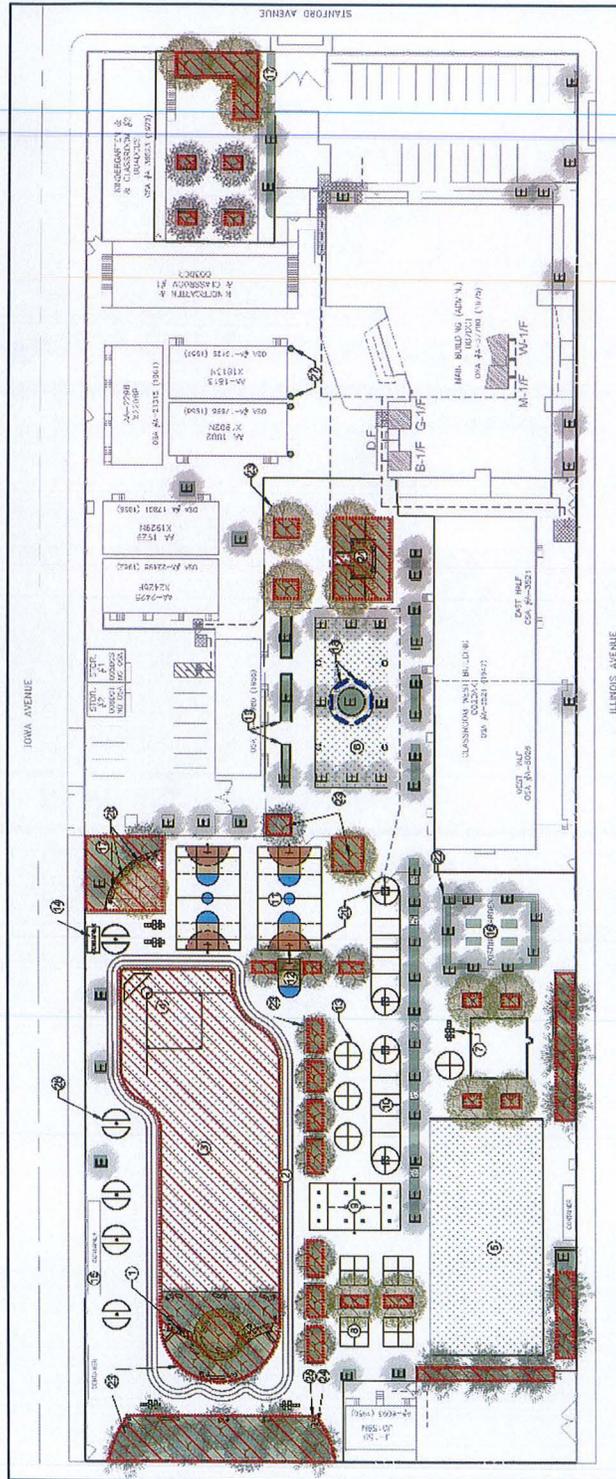


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EXHIBIT A – STANFORD AVENUE ES CAMPUS SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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EXHIBIT A – SUNNY BRAE AVENUE ES CAMPUS SITE PLAN (not to scale)



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EXHIBIT A – WOODCREST ES CAMPUS SITE PLAN (not to scale)

