3E. Land Use and Planning

3E.1 INTRODUCTION

Land use refers to the use of land for various activities, including commercial, industrial, recreational, residential uses, and public uses (e.g., schools and parks). Local land use policies and development regulations control the type of land use and the intensity of development that occurs. Changes in land use patterns that result from new development can affect the character of an area and result in physical impacts to the environment. The analysis of land use in this Section describes relevant plans and regulations, consistency of the proposed project with these plans and regulations, and the potential for any identified inconsistencies to result in direct or indirect physical impacts on the environment.

3E.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3E.2.1 Existing On-Site Land Uses

The proposed project is located on an approximately 35-acre site immediately west of downtown Los Angeles in the Temple/Beaudry neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles. (The site location is discussed further and graphically illustrated in Section 2.2.1, Project Description.) The site is generally “L”-shaped and is bounded by Temple and Colton Streets to the north, North Boylston and North Toluca Streets to the west, Beaudry Avenue to the east, and 1st Street to the south.

The majority of the site is currently rough graded and remains vacant with various partially constructed structures developed as part of the Belmont Learning Complex (BLC) located in the southeastern and central portion of the site. Most of the structures are located along 1st Street and Beaudry Avenue, extending from the intersection of those two streets. These structures included Academy House Nos. 1 through 4, an Administration Building and the Triple Gym. Following LAUSD’s decision to halt construction on the BLC project, the site was secured and has since been subject to limited activity.

3E.2.2 Existing Surrounding Land Uses

The project site is located in an urbanized area that includes a mixture of low-rise, single- and multiple-family residential buildings, commercial uses, public uses and vacant lots. See
Figure 3E-1 on page 3-109. The Temple/Beaudry residential neighborhood is located to the west and north. This neighborhood contains a mixture of low-rise single and multifamily residential buildings and vacant lots. Most of these buildings were built before 1933. Five residential properties, as well as four recently abandoned oil wells (the “Toluca Wells”), are located immediately adjacent to the project, south of the intersection of Toluca Street and Colton Street.

Areas to the east of the project site include a small restaurant and auto body shop (Diamond Motors). The LAUSD Downtown Business Magnet School is located northeast of the project site, and the newer mid-rise Bank of America Data Center (including a parking structure and surface parking) is across Beaudry Avenue. Farther east, high-rise buildings of the downtown Los Angeles business district are clearly visible across the Harbor Freeway.

The area south of the project site, across 1st Street, contains commercial and office uses. In this area, the Department of Water and Power Communications Headquarters and Maintenance Yard Facility is the most prominent building and closest to the site. Farther south on Crown Hill are older mid-rise and newer high-rise commercial buildings. Much of this area has been cleared. The site for Central Los Angeles Area New High School No. 10 is located on Crown Hill, south of the commercial uses on 1st Street.

3E.3 APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

3E.3.1 City of Los Angeles Guidelines

The General Plan is the basic planning document of a city or county and acts as a “blueprint” for development. Every city and county must adopt a general plan with seven mandatory elements: land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety (including seismic, fire, and flood management). Within the City of Los Angeles, the General Plan reflects policies for the provision of schools and parks in its Citywide General Plan Framework and in Community Plans for the City’s 35 geographical areas. Planning policies are implemented through various mechanisms including Specific Plans and related Zoning provisions.

City of Los Angeles General Plan Framework

The Citywide General Plan Framework is the umbrella concept of the General Plan, which is intended to provide the overall guiding vision for Los Angeles into the 21st Century. The Framework includes specific goals for the provision of schools as well as more detailed...
objectives and policies for achieving the goals. Policies related to the provision of schools encourage the City to work with the LAUSD to provide adequate facilities based on population and need (Policies 9.32.1 to 9.32.3.). In addition, Policy 9.33.2 provides for “[development of] a strategy to site community facilities (libraries, parks, schools, and auditoriums) together.”

Likewise, policies for the provision of parks encourage an increase in park provisions to meet existing and future recreation and parks needs of the City (Policies 9.22.1 and 9.24.1). In addition, Policies 9.23.1 through 9.23.4 encourage strategies to increase the lands available for parks. Policy 9.23.3, in particular, encourages the “[establishment of] joint-use agreements with the Los Angeles Unified School District and other public and private entities which could contribute to the availability of recreation opportunities.”

**Westlake Community Plan**

The proposed project site is located within the boundaries of the Westlake Community Plan. This Plan includes, among other planning guidelines, recommended land use designations and objectives and policies regarding the provision of schools and parks. The objectives and policies encourage the preservation of existing recreation and park facilities, the siting of school facilities to serve the needs of existing and future populations, and school location, site layout, and design that is compatible with adjacent land uses and community character (pages III-6 and III-7). A stated program for attaining the objectives and policies for schools states that “The City Department of Recreation and Parks shall work with the Los Angeles Unified School District to develop a program for shared use of school and park sites for recreation, and to encourage siting of new schools adjacent to parks.” (Page III-7)

The portion of the Plan that generally addresses public and institutional service systems notes the following:

“The demand for new or improved public facilities has grown far beyond available City resources. Land for new sites or the expansion of existing sites requires the acquisition of residential properties thereby decreasing the housing stock in the community. Given this constraint, the improvement of existing facilities should be given prime consideration. Whenever possible, concepts of

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67 City of Los Angeles, “Westlake Community Plan.” The Plan provides objectives and policies for Recreation and Parks Facilities/Open Space on page III-6. Objectives and policies for Schools are provided on pages III-6,7. General provisions for Public and Institutional Service Systems are also applicable, as provided on page III-5.
intensification, rehabilitation, reuse, and multiple use of facilities and sites should
be utilized.” (Page III-5)

The role of these policies has been elaborated upon in a letter from the Director of
Planning for the City of Los Angeles to the Superintendent of Schools for the LAUSD:

“It is the explicit policy of the City’s General Plan to help ensure that school
facilities and programs are expanded commensurate with the City’s population
growth and development and to help provide school facilities in areas where there
is deficiency in classroom seats. It is also the City’s policy to encourage joint use
of school facilities with other uses such as parks and libraries.\textsuperscript{68}

The Westlake Community Plan also designates lands within its boundaries for specified
land uses. The uses designated for the project site and the adjacent areas are shown in
Figure 3E-2 on page 3-112. Uses specified for the project site include multiple-family
residential and commercial uses. The commercial designations are located along the site
frontages on 1st Street and Beaudry Avenue. The residential uses are located on the remainder
of the project site. As further described below, schools conform to all General Plan land use
designations in the City of Los Angeles.

Central City West Specific Plan

The Central City West Specific Plan (CCWSP) implements the goals and policies of the
Westlake Community Plan for that portion of the Westlake Community Plan area in which the
proposed project is located. The CCWSP provides zoning designations and other regulatory land
use mechanisms to further attain the Community Plan goals and policies.

The proposed project site is zoned “CW” (Central City West Specific Plan Zone). A
portion of the site is designated as a Mixed-Use Overlay Zone, which allows for a mixture of
residential and commercial uses. Zone designations for individual lots include a mix of
commercial designations: C2(CW) and C4(CW), and residential designations: R4(CW),
R5(CW), and RC5(CW). These zoning designations and their height and floor area ratio (FAR)
extensions are shown on Figure 3E-3 on page 3-113.

Schools may be permitted in all zones within the City of Los Angeles, and therefore
conform to all General Plan land use designations in the City. Public schools are permitted by
right in the following commercial zones: CR, C2, C4, and C5. Schools also are permitted by

\textsuperscript{68} Letter to Mr. Roy Romer, Superintendent of Schools from Con Howe Director of Planning, City of Los Angeles,
Table 3F-2

* RMS Vibration Velocity Level in VdB relative to $10^{-6}$ inches/second

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human/Structural Response</th>
<th>VELOCITY LEVEL *</th>
<th>Typical Sources (50 ft from source)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Threshold, minor cosmetic damage fragile buildings</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Blasting from construction projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty with tasks such as reading a VDT screen</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>Bulldozers and other heavy tracked construction equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential annoyance, infrequent events (e.g. commuter rail)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Commuter rail, upper range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential annoyance, frequent events (e.g. rapid transit)</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Rapid transit, upper range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit for vibration sensitive equipment. Approx. threshold for human perception of vibration</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Commuter rail, typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>Bus or truck over bump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rapid transit, typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bus or truck, typical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Typical background vibration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Federal Transit Administration, US Department of Transportation, April 1995
Figure 3E-3
Specific Plan Zoning, Height and FAR Designations

Source: City of Los Angeles Planning Department, 2000
right in the Public Facilities (PF) Zone and the R4 and R5 multiple family residential zones. Parks are also permitted uses in these zones.

The area to the north and west of the project site is predominantly zoned for residential uses and the area to the south and east of the site is predominantly zoned for commercial uses.

The project site is also located within a designated Park Planned Area. These are areas identified for purchase of lands for park space where funding from Quimby fees or other funds deposited in the Central City West Open Space Account are available.

The CCWSP also specifies height limit and floor area ratio (FAR) provisions that are applicable to the project site. The first number or letter following the zone designation on Figure 3E-3 reflects the height limit; the second number the FAR. Under these provisions the site is designated for differing height and FAR ratio limitations at various locations. The most stringent of the height limitations is 75 feet above grade within the portions of the site designated for both school uses and park uses. The most stringent of the FAR ratios is 3 within both portions of the site.

### 3E.3.2 State Regulation of School Siting

Under the laws of the State of California, school siting and construction are sovereign state activities. State laws allow school districts to override county and city general plans and zoning to carry out their own public works projects. (California Government Code §53094 and §65402c.)

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69 Letter to Mr. Roy Romer, Superintendent of Schools from Con Howe Director of Planning, City of Los Angeles, City Planning, September 25, 2001.

70 City of Los Angeles, Central City West Specific Plan, Map No. 7 and Section 8.E.1. A Park Planned Area does not necessarily correspond to a zoning designation but identifies an area where acquisition of park space is desired.

71 The “O” tagged onto the designation in some lots indicates that the lot is in the Oil Drilling District, pursuant to Article 3, Chapter 1 of the LAMC.

72 Height limitations for the proposed project site are presented in Map No. 2 of the Central City West Specific Plan. Height limits vary across lots within the project area. Some of the lots carry a 75-foot limit. Other lots carry a U designation under which heights are governed by Section 8A of the Specific Plan. Such lots on the school site, which is east of Bixel Street are limited to 1,268 feet above mean sea level, or approximately 810 to 880 feet above the existing site elevation. Such lots in the park site, west of Bixel Street are limited to 1,218 feet above mean sea level, or approximately 780 to 860 feet above grade.

73 FAR ratios for the proposed project site are presented in Map No. 2 of the Central City West Specific Plan. FAR ratios vary across lots within the project area. Some of the lots carry a FAR of 3 and others carry a ratio of 6. Lots on the park site, carry ratios of 3, 6, and 7.5.
3E. Land Use and Planning

The LAUSD Board of Education may render the zoning ordinance inapplicable on a two-thirds vote of the Board of Education.

3E.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

3E.4.1 Methodology

The analysis of land use impacts addresses the regulatory framework that guides the location of development and the resulting land use patterns that emerge. The analysis compares the existing and proposed uses at the project site to the uses anticipated in existing plans and policies to determine whether the proposed uses are consistent within the planning framework. The analysis regarding the land use patterns examines the land use relationships that would occur between the proposed uses and the existing surrounding uses to determine whether the new uses would divide the existing community.

3E.4.2 Criteria for Determining Significance

The criteria used to determine the significance of an impact are based on the model initial study checklist in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines. The proposed project may result in significant impacts if it would:

- Physically divide an established community.
- Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, where the inconsistency is evidence of an underlying significant physical impact.  

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74 An inconsistency with a plan, policy, or regulation does not necessarily equate to a significant impact on the environment. Impacts on the environment pursuant to CEQA ordinarily focus on changes in the physical environment. A plan inconsistency is considered significant if it would directly or indirectly lead to a physical impact on the environment.
3E.4.3 Project Impacts

Impact E1: The proposed project could physically divide an established community. *This is a less than significant impact.*

The proposed project would convert the existing vacant lands and partially completed buildings on the project site to a finished park and high school. The park would be improved with landscaping and facilities that would serve surrounding neighborhoods and provide a center for educational and community activity. Likewise, the completion of the school would enhance the project site from its current degraded condition, to a use that would also provide a focus for neighborhood activity. Typically, school facilities and parks tend to unite rather than divide communities.

Implementation of the project uses would occur within the boundaries of the project site and would not require modifications to any surrounding neighborhoods or changes in surrounding uses. The existing uses that surround the project site would not be disrupted by an incursion of new development. The school and park would provide a transition buffer between the residential neighborhoods to the north and northeast and the commercial areas that rim the Hollywood Freeway (US-101) and the Harbor Freeway (SR-110). These freeways separate the neighborhood from other areas to the north, northeast, and south. The surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas are distinct from one another and bordered by the current project edges.

For these reasons, the proposed project would not physically divide an established community. Impacts would be less than significant.

**Mitigation Measures**

No mitigation measures are required.

**Residual Impacts**

Impacts would be less than significant.
Impact E2: The proposed project could conflict with applicable land use plans, policies, or regulations of agencies with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. This is a less than significant impact.

The proposed project would convert the existing vacant lands and partially completed buildings on the project site to a high school and a joint-use natural park and recreation area. The intent of the new high school is to address shortfalls in schoolroom capacity that have been identified by the LAUSD, and to relieve overcrowding at the existing Belmont Senior High School by providing up to 2,600 seats for grades 9 through 12. As described in Section 2.1.3, the proposed facilities are part of a concept plan to provide school facilities based on needs assessments and the conditions of existing facilities within the area.

The school would include the needed classrooms, as well as indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, arts space, science labs, an auditorium, food service facilities and administration space. The park would include native plant communities, watershed features, educational opportunities, a soccer field with spectator seating, picnic areas, play areas and trails, an outdoor amphitheater, an urban fishing pond, and a parking lot for visitors.

Implementation of the project would convert the vacant, partially developed site to a finished, landscaped site providing services for the local community. These uses would increase the overall provision of park and school facilities within the City, within the Westlake Community Plan area and within the Central City West Specific Plan area.

Project implementation would further the attainment of planning goals and policies, consistent with local plans. As described in the Setting Section above, it is the explicit policy of the City’s General Plan to help ensure that school facilities and programs are expanded commensurate with the City’s population growth and development, and to help provide school facilities in areas where there is a deficiency in classroom seats. The LAUSD has determined that new high school facilities are essential for the children of residents in the Belmont High School attendance area, which includes the Temple/Beaudry neighborhood. Further, the project contributes to the attainment of plan provisions for preservation and improvement of existing facilities, multiple use of facilities and joint/shared use of use of schools and park sites. The project also adds new park space in an area designated for purchase of park lands, as a Park Planned Area.
The proposed project uses are uses-by-right under the existing plan designations and zoning and are, therefore, consistent with the zoning designations established in the CCWSP. The maximum building heights on the site, approximately 65 feet above grade would be well below the 75-foot limits established in the CCWSP. The FAR within the school site, approximately 0.3 (306,240 sq.ft./24 acres), and park site (negligible FAR, with 2,000 sq.ft. on 10.5 acres) would be well below the FAR limit of 3.0 that is established in the CCWSP. Therefore, building massing would not exceed limits established in the CCWSP.

The current CCWSP includes a planned, landscaped median on Beaudry Avenue that would extend from Sunset Boulevard to 4th Street. The planned median is a design feature of a proposed improvement of Beaudry Avenue to Major Highway standards with left turn pockets provided only at intersections. None of the proposed median has been implemented at this time. The proposed project does not provide for, but would not preclude, implementation of such median in the design of its frontage along Beaudry Avenue between Temple Street and 1st Street. The turning movements into and from the project would be designed and striped in compliance with applicable road design standards and would not adversely affect existing traffic conditions along Beaudry Avenue, nor the roadway’s plan designation. The need to maintain turn pockets to support access to the school parking structure with the possible future development of the median, would reduce by a small amount the overall median landscaping that might otherwise be provided. At the same time, the proposed project would provide new additional landscaping along the western side of Beaudry Avenue. In light of the above, this minor variation from the CCWSP would not contribute to a physical impact on the environment. Under CEQA a plan inconsistency would be considered significant if it would directly or indirectly lead to a substantial physical impact on the environment.

Off-site improvements to be implemented as part of the proposed project, include street widenings; dedications; and vacations, which have already been implemented (e.g., Edgeware Road, Bixel Street, and Boylston Street between 1st Street and Colton Street; and Mignonette Street, Colton Street, Court Street, and Angelina Street between Beaudry Avenue and Boylston Street); as well as placement of street lighting and sidewalk improvements. Off-site
infrastructure improvements would be implemented per standard construction practices and the applicable requirements of the City of Los Angeles.

School siting criteria requires that existing or proposed zoning of the surrounding properties be compatible with schools in that it would not pose a potential health or safety risk to students or staff. The residential and commercial zoning in areas surrounding the project site provide for uses that would not necessarily, by their nature create health or safety risks. The zoning is typical of zoning surrounding most schools. Households and commercial uses in the area are subject to standard use regulations for the public health.

For the reasons discussed above, the proposed project would not conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect, where the inconsistency is evidence of an underlying significant physical impact. Impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are required.

Residual Impacts

Impacts would be less than significant.

3E.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Related projects that would contribute to cumulative impacts are identified in Section 2, Project Description and Environmental Setting. Impacts to land use are generally site-specific and do not substantially change the land use character of the larger area, unless a local or regional trend in development or zone change is apparent. The proposed project is located within an urbanized area and encompasses a relatively small site compared to the larger urban context in which the site is located. The related projects are mostly small commercial and residential projects. The related projects are of an in-fill nature and are not located adjacent to the project site. In addition, none of the related projects are located between the school and the Hollywood and Harbor Freeways, which form the distinct boundaries of the neighborhood. As previously mentioned, the proposed project would provide a transition buffer between the residential neighborhoods to the north and northeast and the commercial areas that rim the Hollywood and Harbor Freeways, which separate the neighborhood from other areas to the
north, northeast, and south. The project would not contribute, in concert with other projects, to the division of an established community.

The related projects would be subject to review per General Plan requirements (inclusive of applicable Specific Plan and Municipal Code Zoning provisions) and/or CEQA analyses, as applicable. Any potential related project conflicts with existing plans would be resolved, or result in a localized project impact, which in many instances, would be reduced or avoided through implementation of CEQA mitigation measures. As the project is not in conflict with applicable land use plan, policies or regulations, the project would not contribute to a cumulative conflict.

Two of the related projects are LAUSD high schools in the vicinity of the proposed project site: Central Los Angeles Area High School No. 9 and Central Los Angeles Area High School No. 10. These high schools, like the proposed project, are part of the LAUSD school development program that is based on an evaluation of population needs. The proposed project, along with other LAUSD projects, would contribute to cumulatively beneficial impacts associated with providing necessary school facilities for school-age residents in the City of Los Angeles. Provision of these facilities is consistent with the needs identified by policies of the General Plan. Therefore, the proposed project does not contribute to a conflict with existing plans so as to cause a significant adverse affect with regard to plan policies.

All of the related projects are located within a highly urbanized setting. Therefore, it is expected that none of the related projects would fall within a habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan. Should any related projects fall within such an area, potential impacts would be addressed pursuant to the applicable plans and/or CEQA. As the proposed project conflicts with no such plans, it would not contribute to a significant cumulative impact.