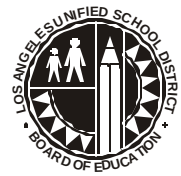


Los Angeles Unified School District

OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

333 S. Beaudry Ave., 1st floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017
Phone: (213) 241-6766
FAX: (213) 241-8952
www.lausd.net



News Release

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OPTIONS FOR THREE SCHOOL CAMPUS AT THE AMBASSADOR HOTEL SITE ARE RELEASED BY LAUSD

Draft EIR Compares Five Alternative Development Concepts for the Site

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Superintendent Roy Romer today announced the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for a three-school campus at the Ambassador Hotel site in the Wilshire District area of Los Angeles. The District's goal is to construct three schools on the Ambassador property to help relieve intense overcrowding at schools in the surrounding neighborhood. The District is planning a K-12 campus on the 23.8-acre site which desperately needs an 825 seat elementary school, a 1,392 seat middle school, and a 2,154 seat high school. The Phase I plan for these schools will get students off the buses and provide 180-day instructional calendars.

"This document contains five project alternates for the Ambassador site instead of the usual single 'preferred' alternate," said Romer. "This is a strong indication of the District's thoroughness, openness, and commitment to fully explore as many possibilities as feasible, while continuing to move forward with our obligation to provide these desperately needed seats as quickly as possible."

The community surrounding the Ambassador site contains the most overcrowded schools in the District. The three school campus will relieve five severely overcrowded schools: Belmont High School, Los Angeles High School, Berendo Middle School, Virgil Middle School and Hoover Elementary.

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More than 3,800 children who live around these five schools are bused out of their neighborhood each day – sometimes more than an hour each way. This is three to four times more children than are bused out of any other community the District serves.

The DEIR contains the following five alternates currently under consideration:

Alternate One, Maximum Reuse:

This option would reuse the original hotel tower, Embassy Ballroom, the Cocoanut Grove, the Paul Williams-designed coffee shop and the corridor where Senator Robert F. Kennedy (RFK) was assassinated. Cost: \$381,900,000. School Completion Date: March 2009

Alternate Two, Partial Reuse:

This option would reuse the Cocoanut Grove, reconstruct the Embassy Ballroom and preserve both the RFK site and the coffee shop. Cost: \$307,400,000. School Completion Date: December 2007

Alternate Three, Reuse of North Tower:

This option would reuse the North tower of the existing Ambassador Hotel building (the side facing Wilshire Boulevard) and the Cocoanut Grove, while preserving the coffee shop.

Cost: \$320,800,000. School Completion Date: July 2008

Alternate Four, New Construction:

This option is entirely new construction with no preservation. Cost: \$286,300,000. School Completion Date: September 2007

Alternate Five, Commercial Frontage:

This option would declare the front six acres 'surplus' and sell them for commercial use while reusing and preserving most of the existing structure, much like Alternate One. Under this alternate, an elementary school could not be constructed and a new site for it would have to be identified, which would require taking a number of homes in a very dense community. Cost: \$403,600,000. School Completion Date: March 2009

Joining Romer at Hoover Elementary School to announce the release of the DEIR was School Board President Caprice Young and members of the District's Facilities Services Division team.

"The most important thing is that we build schools that address the needs and reflect the character of the Wilshire Center community as soon as possible," said Young. "I hope the document released today will help us achieve that goal."

"I look forward to reviewing the document and reaching out to stakeholders and the local community as the school district decides collectively upon the best path to take to build a much needed school in this area," added Jose Huizar, who represents the area where the former Ambassador Hotel is located.

Selection of a project alternative will be based on an evaluation of environmental impacts, cost, schedule, operational and design issues and other key factors. There has been significant work conducted over the past 18-months to prepare for the release of this DEIR, which included thorough surveying of the options by engineering and construction analysts and four community input sessions to receive feedback from the constituents that will be served by these schools.

The DEIR will be distributed to affected agencies, surrounding cities, counties and interested parties for a 45-60 day review period in accordance with Section 15087 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines. In addition, the District will be holding additional community meetings and public hearings this summer to address the DEIR. A full public schedule to follow. All public written comments are due by the end of August.

After the District has reviewed and addressed all public comments, certification of the DEIR and selection of a development alternative is expected by the LAUSD Board of Education in October 2003.

The DEIR is available for public viewing at the following locations: LAUSD Office of Communications, Pio-Pico Koreatown Branch Library, Wilshire Branch Library, Memorial Branch Library, Los Angeles Central Library, Belmont Senior High, Berendo Middle School, Virgil Middle School, Hoover Elementary School and www.laschools.org/amb.