Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health and Safety

ANDRÉS E. CHAIT
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 October 16 2026

UNTIL November 16 2026

REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2026 220440

FILED
Oct 16 2026

Dean C. Logan, Registrar – Recorder/County Clerk

Electronically signed by MARY JOANNE FUAINA

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:
Shade Structures Project at three (3) Los Angeles Unified Campuses

Project Location – Specific:

1. Blythe Elementary School, 18730 Blythe Street, Reseda, California
2. Napa Elementary School, 19010 Napa Street, Northridge, California
3. Ranchito Elementary School, 7940 Ranchito Avenue, Panorama City, California

Project Location – City:
Various

Project Location – County:
Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:
The projects (Project or Projects) at the three LA Unified campuses (Campus or Campuses) will provide new shade structure(s) and associated landscape and hardscape improvements pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Board of Education authorized a total of $914,750 on June 6, 2026, for the Projects at Blythe ES and Ranchito ES, and authorized $330,726 for the Project at Napa ES on November 19, 2024.

The Project will be individually designed on each of the four Campuses. The table below describes the components of the Project proposed for each Campus:

School	1 Shade Structure	Drinking Foutain Upgrades	Path of Travel Upgrades
Blythe ES	X		X
Napa ES	X	X	X
Ranchito ES	X		X

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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 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

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 15268[2]]:
- ☐ Declared Emergency [PRC Section 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(a)]:
- ☐ Emergency Project [PRC Section 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines Section15269(b)(c)]:
- ☒ Categorical Exemption (PRC Section 21084; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15300 -15333):
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 – Accessory Structures*
- ☐ 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.

All Projects will result in the installation of new shade structure(s) on the existing play yards as well as path of travel upgrades. The new shade structures will address unmet Campus needs and provide students with a safe and healthy learning environment. All proposed Project components would involve minor alterations to existing Campuses and will occur within the area occupied by existing play yards at each Campus. Installation of the new shade structure(s) will not present a new or expanded use of the Campus. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Section 15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

[1] LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR)," https://www.lausd.org/ceqa, adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.
[2] CEQA Guidelines can be found at California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 – Section 15387.

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Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made to the exterior of the structure.

The Projects will result in the installation of a new shade structures on the existing play yards. The new shade structures will address unmet campus needs and provide students with a safe and healthy learning environment. Installation of the new shade structure will not result in an increase or alteration of the current use, function, or capacity of the existing Campus. The shade structures would be characterized as new, small facilities or accessory structures as defined by Section 15303 (e) "Accessory (appurtenant) structures including garages, carports, patios, swimming pools, and fences." Therefore, the Projects meet the requirements of CEQA guidelines Section 15303.

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 Projects will include the installation of new shade structures and path of travel upgrades that involve minimal land disturbance. Installation will not involve major grading, excavation, or other significant alterations to land. Installation of the carport and shade structures will not result in the removal of any trees. Therefore, the Projects meet the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15304.

Section 15311 – Accessory Structures

Class 11 consists of construction or replacement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including, but not limited to, on-premises signs and small parking lots.

The Projects will include installation of new shade structures on the existing play yards. The new shade structures are consistent with the existing use of the Project areas and will enhance playground experience and support the primary educational and recreational use of the sites. The Projects will serve as supplementary facilities to enhance the functionality of the existing playground. Therefore, the Projects meet the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15311.

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.

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

   The Project sites are fully developed Campuses within urbanized communities.[3] The Campuses are not designated as biologically sensitive locations. The nearest significant ecological area (SEA)

[3] City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, http://zimas.lacity.org/, accessed September 2026.

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is the Hansen Dam, located approximately 2.8 miles to the northeast from Ranchito ES site.[4] The nearest critical habitat is the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher located approximately 4.2 miles northeast of Ranchito ES.[5,6] The Projects would occur entirely within the limits of the existing Campuses and within areas that are currently paved. As such, the Projects 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 they will likely have ongoing maintenance activities and minor alterations 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 Projects would not result in any lasting operational impacts once construction is complete, the Projects would not contribute to cumulative impacts when considered with expected successive projects. Therefore, no cumulative impacts will result from the Projects 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 Projects 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 Projects 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.[7]

The Projects 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 conducted and a determination memorandum will be created for all Campuses prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. Excavated soil 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

[4] United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html accessed September 2026.
[5] United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html accessed September 2026.
[6] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed September 2026.
[7] 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.

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Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1466, and other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.[8] 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.[9] Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1.[10] Therefore, the Projects 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 Highway or SR-2, which is located approximately 14 miles east of Ranchito ES.[11] 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.[12] Therefore, the Projects 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.*

Blythe ES, Napa ES, and Ranchito ES are all less than 45 years old. The LAUSD Historic Preservation Specialist determined that none of the Campuses are eligible as historic resources.[13] Therefore, the Project would have no impacts to historic resources.

Prepared By:

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[8] 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] 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.
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, https://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html. Accessed September 2026.
[12] California Department of Toxic Substances Control. DTSC Databases. Available at: https://dtsc.ca.gov/dtscs-cortese-list/ Accessed September 2026.
[13] LAUSD. 2020. Historic Resources Inventory. Los Angeles, CA, last accessed September 2026.

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Signed by: Date: 10/2/26

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

Attachment: Exhibit A – Site Plans

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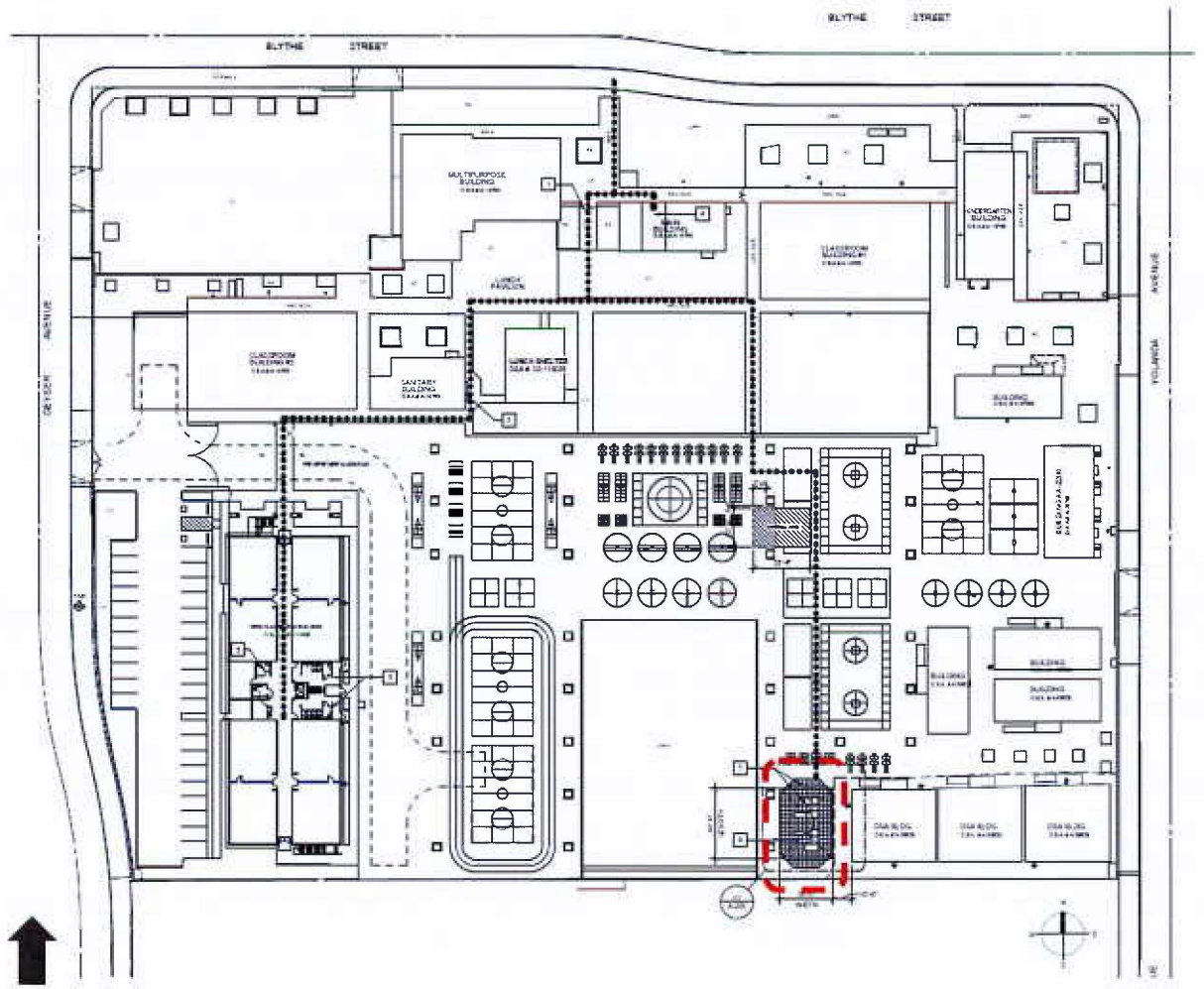
EXHIBIT A – BLYTHE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE PLAN (not to scale)



SITE PLAN

PROJECT SITE

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EXHIBIT A – NAPA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE PLAN (not to scale)

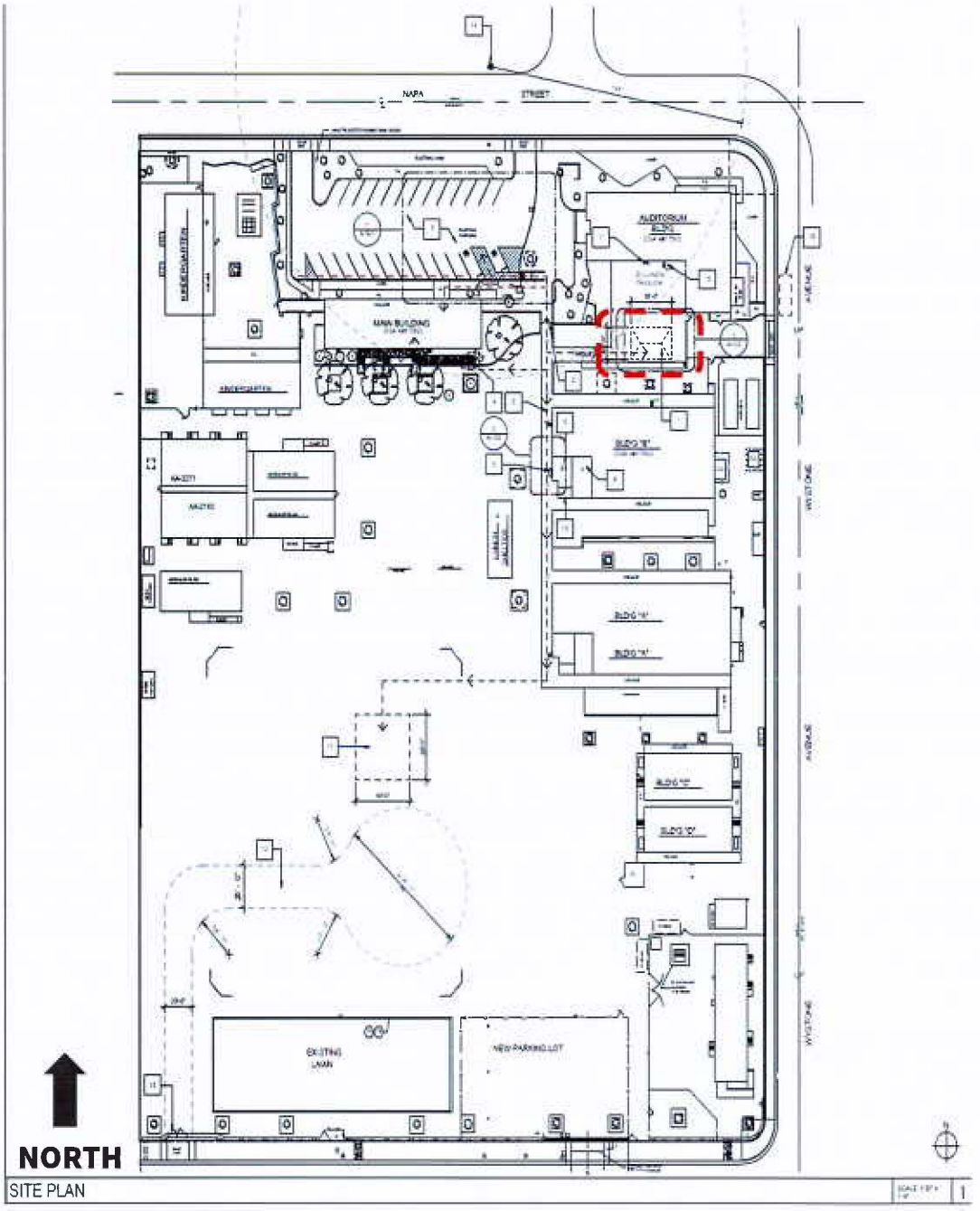

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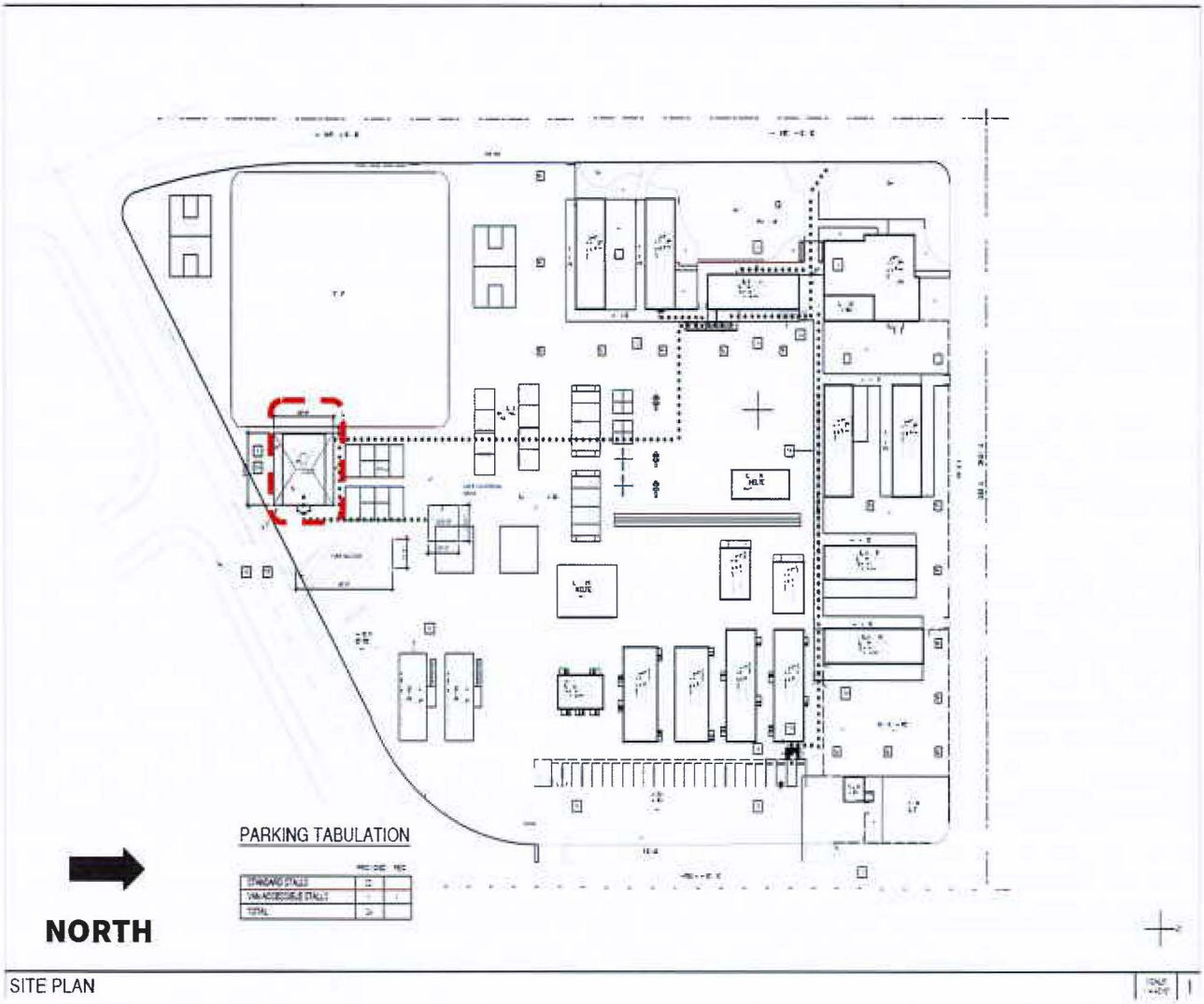
EXHIBIT A – RANCHITO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITE PLAN (not to scale)



SITE PLAN

PROJECT SITE