



# APPEAL OF ALVERNO HEIGHTS ACADEMY MASTER PLAN UPDATE

**200 North Michillinda Avenue**

Master Plan Update

Conditional Use Permit Amendment

Addendum to Mitigated Negative Declaration and Monitoring Program

Sierra Madre City Council

February 14, 2023

Planning & Community Preservation Department

# AGENDA

1. Ex parte disclosures
2. City staff presentation and City Council Questions
3. Appellant's argument and City Council Questions
4. Public Comment

Continue Public Hearing to February 28, 2022

1. Alverno Heights Academy argument
2. Public comment
3. City Council discussion and determination

# PARTIES

## Applicant

Julia Fanara, AHA Head of School

Ken Farfsing, AHA President Board of Trustees

## Applicant Consultants

Carrie Chasteen & Marie Campbell, Sapphos Environmental

Staci Nesbitt, AIA, GGA Architects

Kurt Pederson, Senior Civil Engineer, RKA Group

William Zimmerman, WGZE Traffic Engineering

Indi Savitala, Director, Acoustics, CSDA Design Group

Greg Applegate, ASCA, Arborgate Consulting, Inc.

## Appellant

Kristin and Keith Stephens

Jason Sanders, Law Office of Venskus and Associates

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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De Novo hearing

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Entitlements:

1. Master Plan Update
  2. Conditional Use Permit Amendment
  3. Addendum to the 2011 Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration and Monitoring Program for the refined project.
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The City Council may also adopt additional conditions of approval or findings to strength the administrative record.

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# BACKGROUND

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1924- Villa Del Sol de Oro (Villa) constructed as a private residence.

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1942- Property sold to Sisters of St. Francis.

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1959 - Sisters opened AHA as an all-girls school (enrollment 500 maximum)

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July 2011 - Master Plan approved by Commission.

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October 2022 - Villa CUP for Special Event Use Approved by Commission.

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December 2022 - Commission approved the Master Plan Amendment.

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December 2022, the Appellant files an appeal.

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# PROJECT LOCATION



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**200 North Michillinda Avenue**

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**Site Area:** 12.10-acre site on the western boundary of the City adjoining East Pasadena

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**Land Use:** Institutional

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**Zone:** Institutional

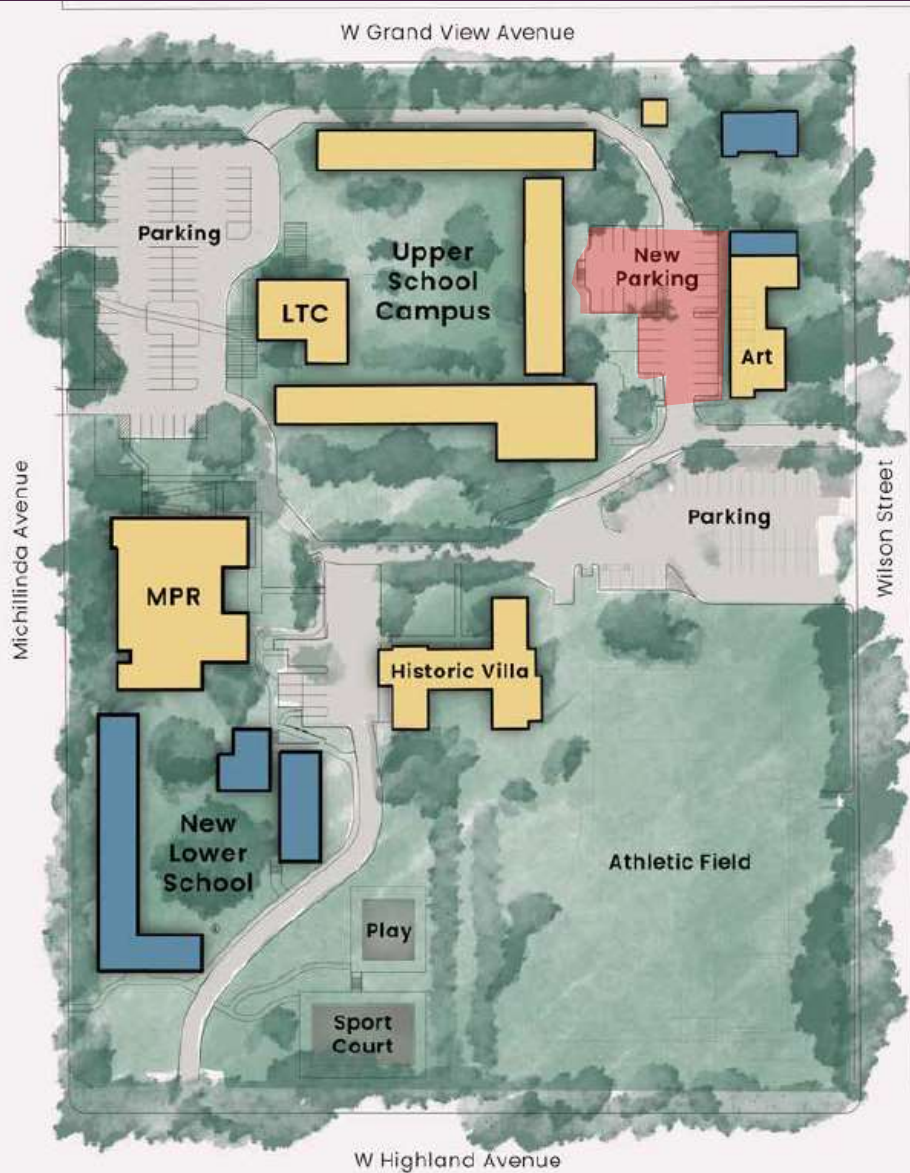
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**Neighborhood:** R-1 Low-Density Residential / Institutional

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# PROPOSED CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS



## 2011 Master Plan:

- Completed Wilson drop-off zone, Parking Lot, Athletic Field, Michillinda Multi-Purpose Building (planned)

## 2021 Master Plan:

- Return 400 SF chapel use as garage/storage
- Convert (2,080 SF) caretaker cottage to New flexible Classroom space
- Add 1,200 SF addition to existing visual performing arts building
- Demolish 1,915 SF faculty offices to accommodate 31 faulty parking stalls

# CONCEPTUAL MASSING MODEL

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## 2021 Master Plan:

Adaptive reuse of the Villa:

- School business office
- Chapel
- Faculty lounge
- Student activities

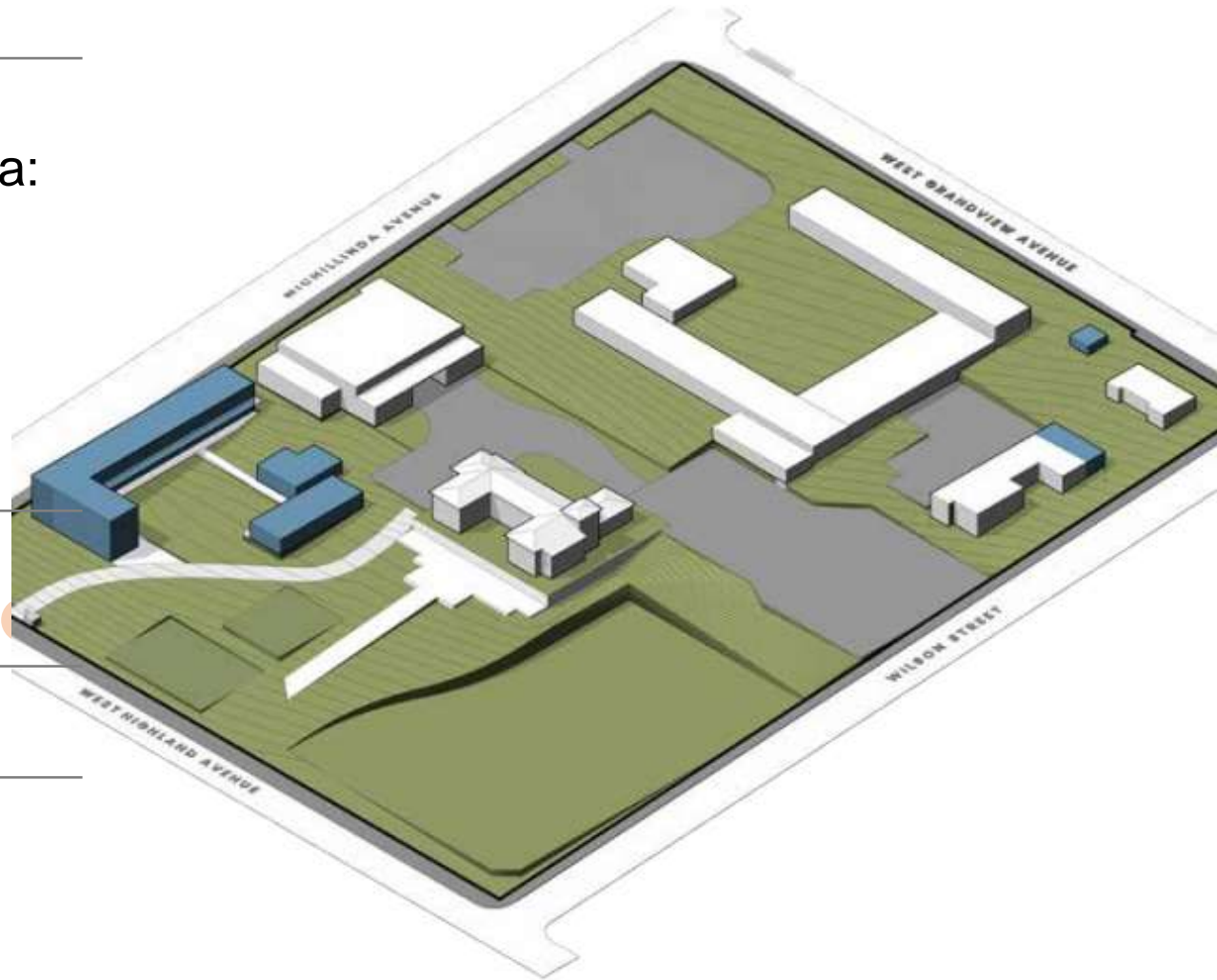
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Maintain curved road  
for new internal drop-off

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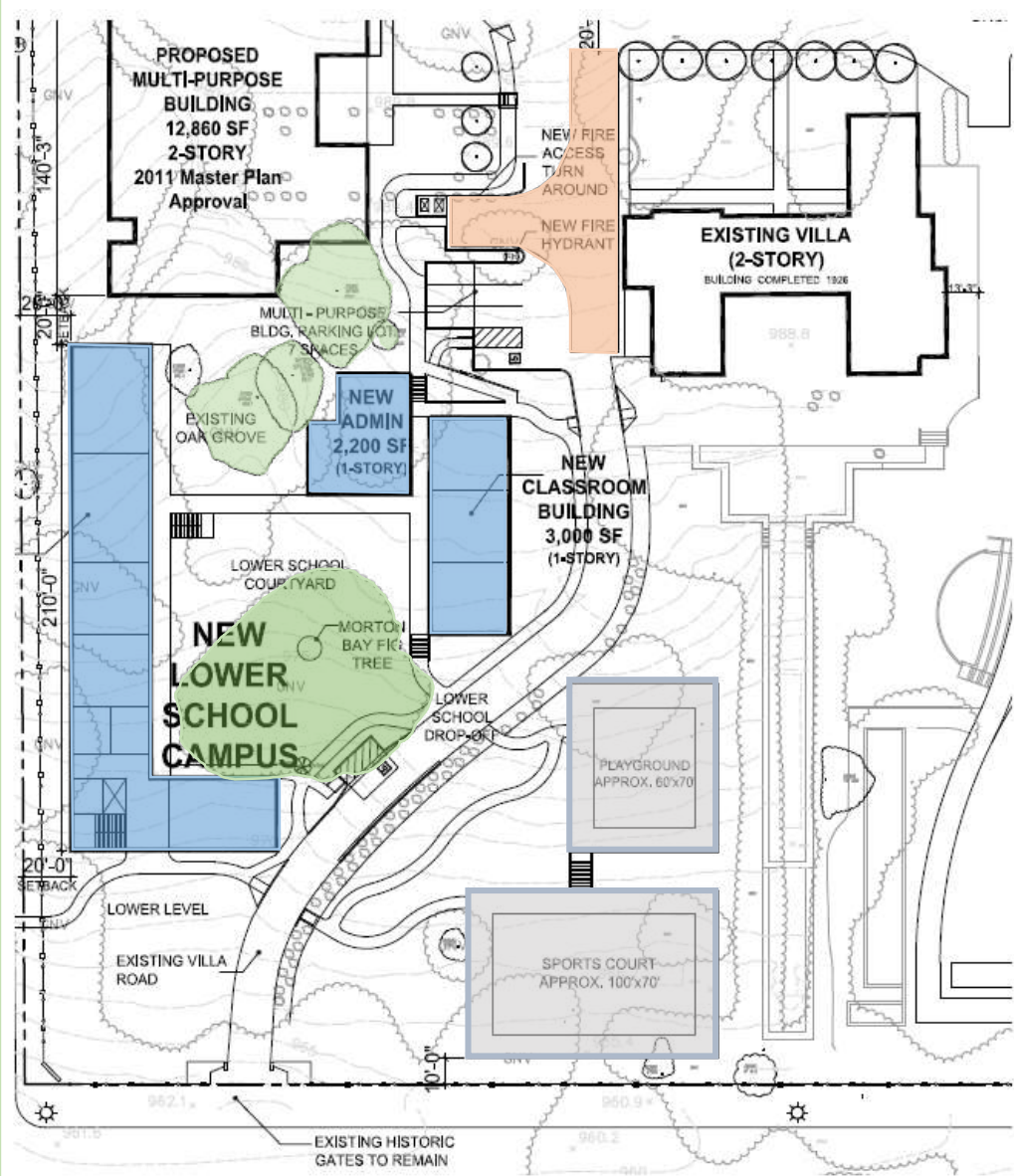
Maintain historic gates

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# PROPOSED NEW LOWER SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS



**TK-8<sup>th</sup> grade co-ed instruction**

## Structures:

- 20,000 SF elementary school
- 2,200 SF administrative offices
- 3,000 SF middle school

**Preserve Morton Bay Fig Tree and Oak grove**

## Athletic Facilities

- New 60'x70' playground
- New 100'x70' sports court

**Fire Truck Turn-Around**

# ARCHITECTURAL CONCEPTS





# CONCEPTUAL MASSING MODEL

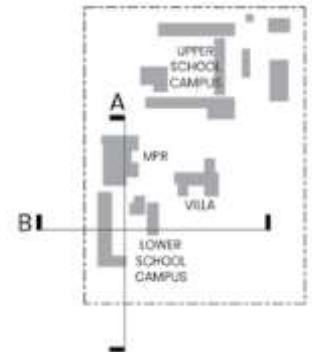
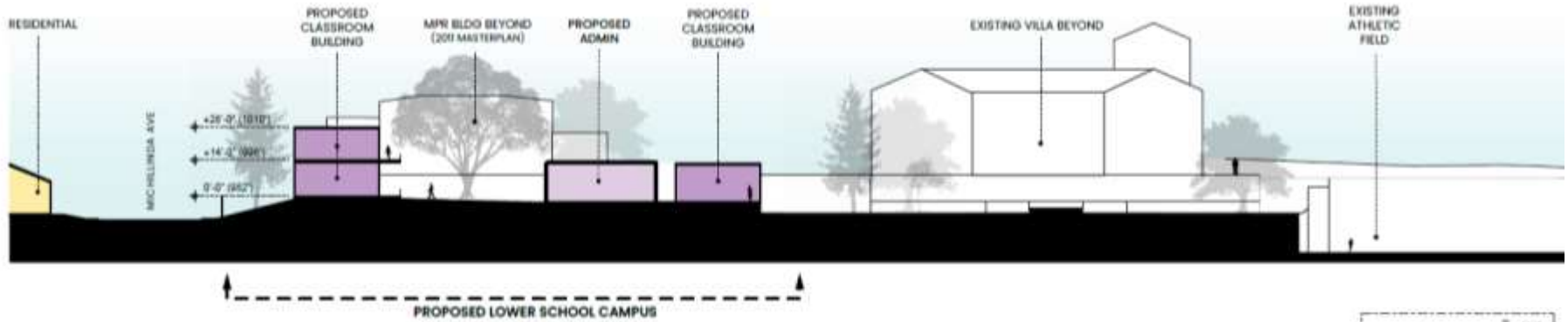
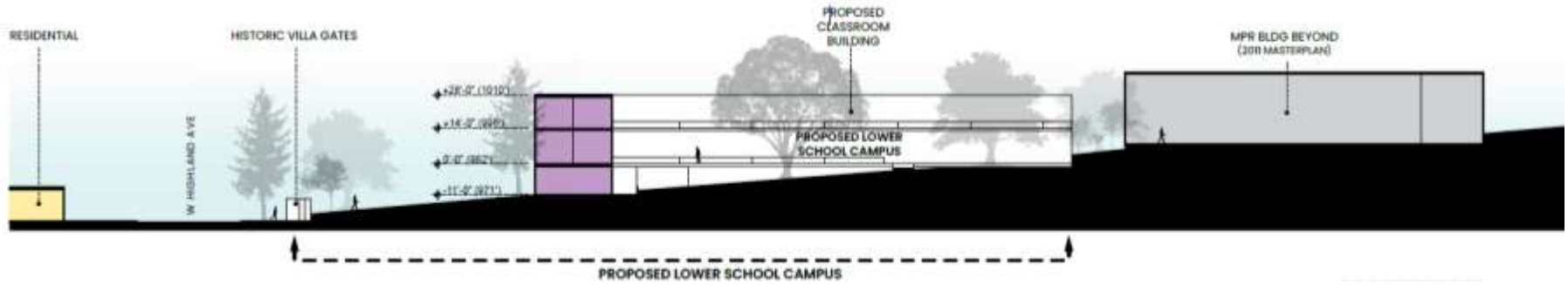


View From Michillinda Avenue looking North/East



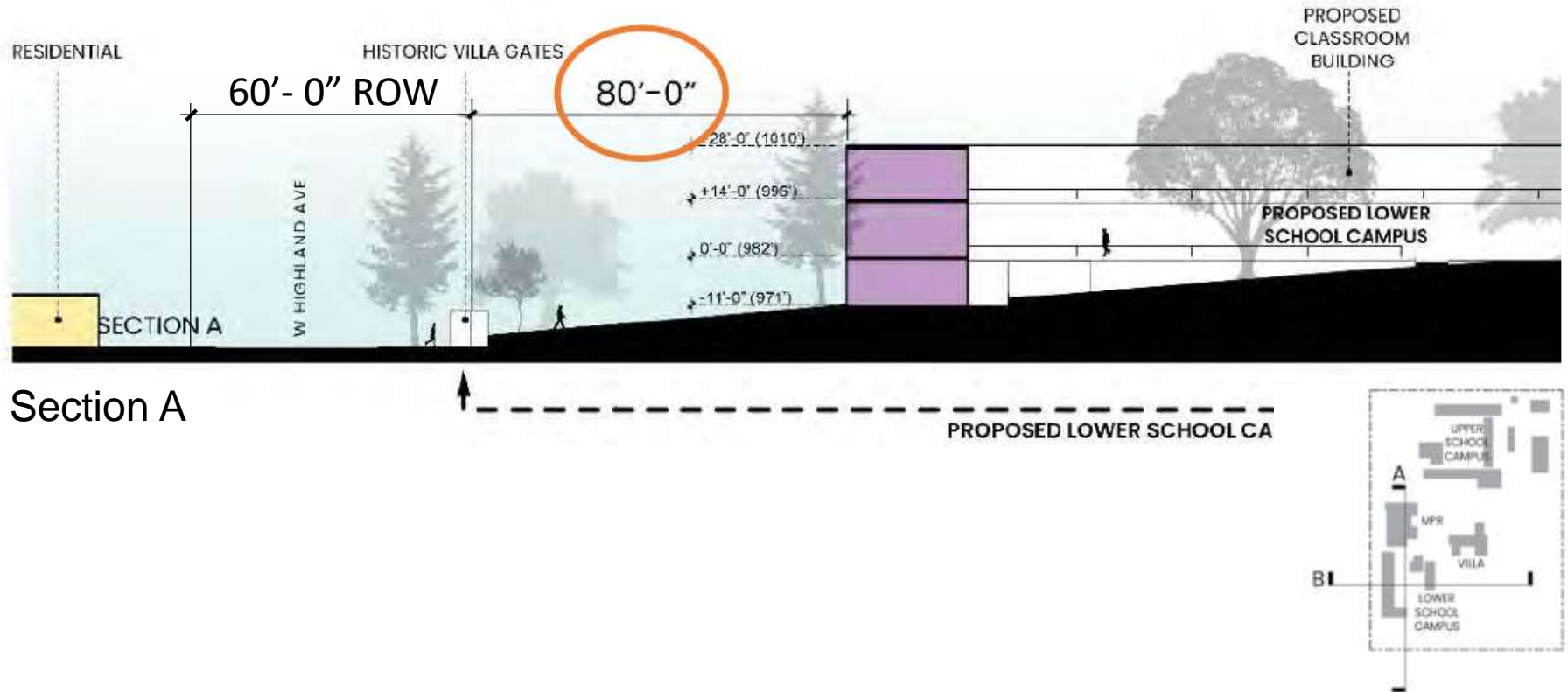
View From West Highland Avenue looking North

# SECTIONAL STUDIES



# SECTIONAL STUDIES

## Highland Avenue Setback

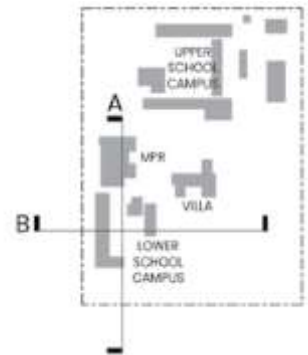
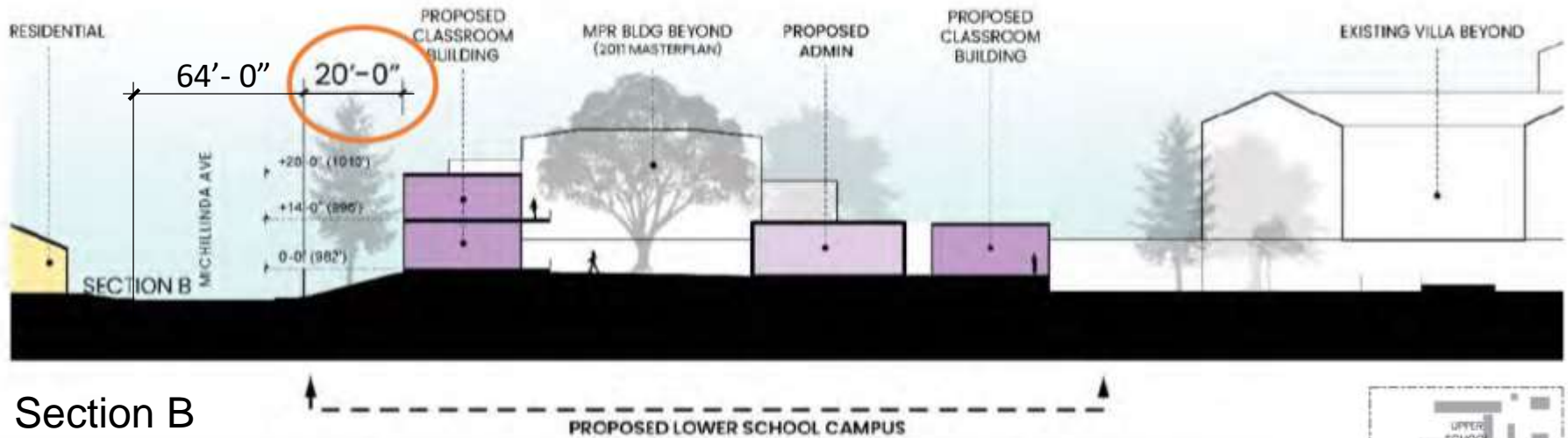


Section A



# SECTIONAL STUDIES

## Michillinda Avenue Setback



# CONCEPT LOWER SCHOOL LANDSCAPE PLAN



Carob at Michilinda Setback



Indian Laurel at SW corner of Villa



Pindo palms north of New Classroom Building



Deodar Cedar at Michilinda Setback



Coast Live Oak preserved throughout Site



Canary Island Pine Street Trees along Highland Avenue



Queenland Kauri north of New Administration Building



Ribbon Gum along Michilinda



Morton Bay Fig preserved at new Courtyard



Strawberry Tree north of New Administration Building



Campfire at edge of north play area



Jacaranda at SW corner



Canary Island Date Palm preserved throughout site



#### Plant Legend

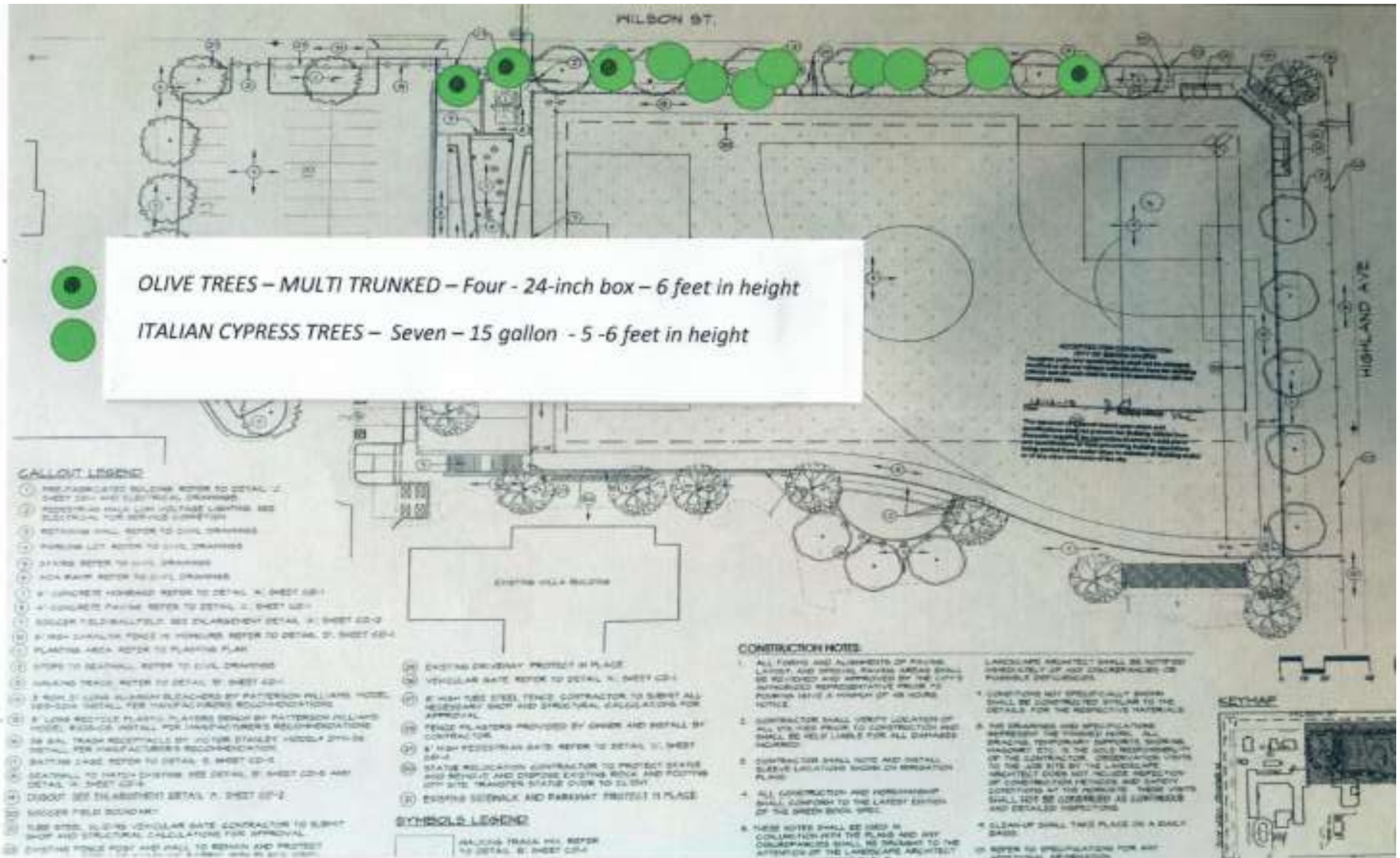
- (+) Existing Tree (Refer to Consulting Arborist's Report for exact species description)
- (x) Existing Canary Island Palm
- (+) New A-plant Tree
- (x) New Medium Shrub Massings
- (x) New A-plant Shrub Massings
- (x) New Turf Area

#### Legend

- 1 Existing Hedge, fill in gaps with 5gal. sized plant material
- 2 Existing 5' High Chainlink Fence with vines, fill in gaps with 5 gal. plant material
- 3 Existing 8' High Wall, fill in gaps with medium and large shrub massings
- 4 Existing Oak Trees and Canopy
- 5 Existing Canary Island Pine Street Trees
- 6 Existing Jacaranda at Campus Signage
- 7 Existing Morton Bay Fig



# WILSON STREET LANDSCAPE PLAN



# CEQA ANALYSIS SUMMARY

2021 Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration Determined:

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The certified 2011 IS/MND continues to apply.

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All 18 of the 2011 Mitigation Measures continue to apply.

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Conditions of approval protect surrounding and adjacent properties.

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Ambient noise levels remain consistent with Mitigation Measures.

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Neighborhood traffic remains at LOS A.

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# ARBORIST REPORT UPDATED 2021

## Arborgate Consulting

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13 protected Oak trees on the property.

Rank as inadequate to good health and display structural defects.

The removal of two Oaks is proposed, which must be mitigated according to the City Mitigation Matrix.

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4 non-protected specimen trees: Moreton Bay Fig, Queensland Kauri, and Indian Laurel

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Tree Preservation Report recommends avoiding the dripline of the protected oaks and unique specimen trees to remain.

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# CULTURAL RESOURCES TECHNICAL REPORT

2021 by Sapphos Environmental, Inc.

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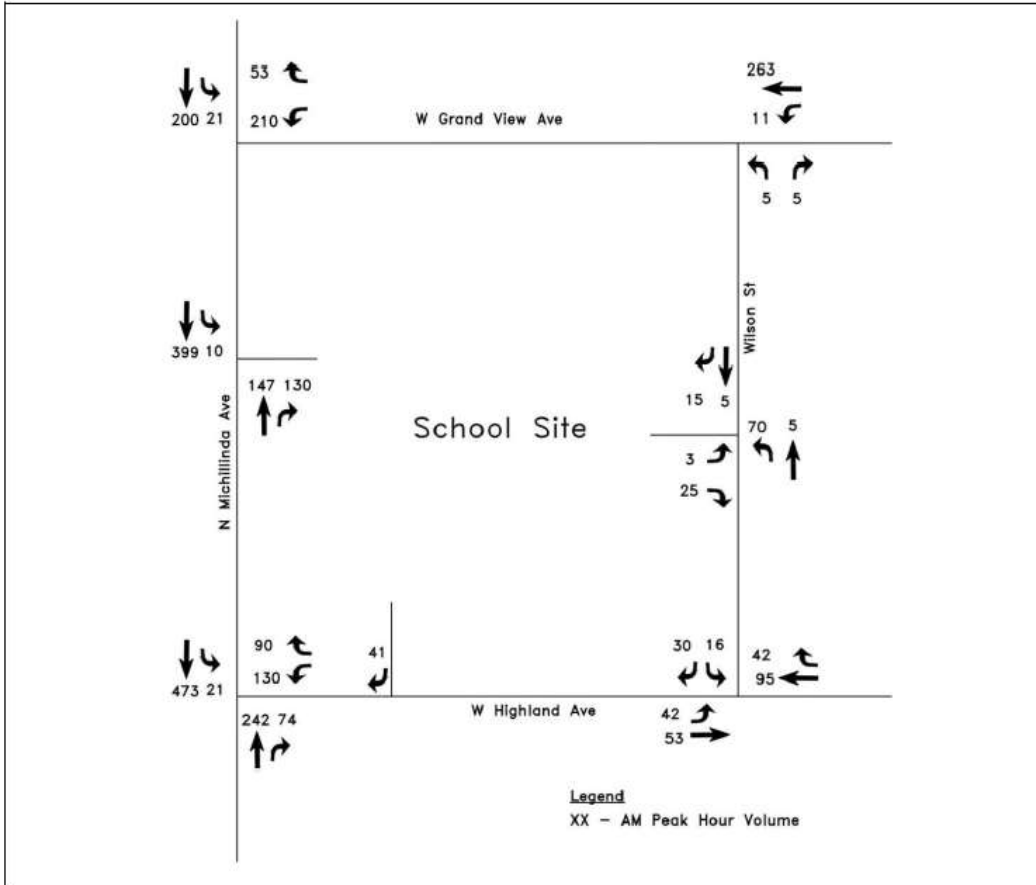
The Technical Report determined that there is a less than significant impact on the Villa due to the construction of lower campus improvements.

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# 2020 TRAFFIC SIMULATION MODEL

## WGZE Engineering



- Ambient growth factor of 0.5% per year over a 10-year period
- Focused on morning peak traffic hour conditions
- The model determined that the addition of the lower school will result in no significant traffic impact at study intersections.

# NEIGHBORHOOD WORKSHOPS

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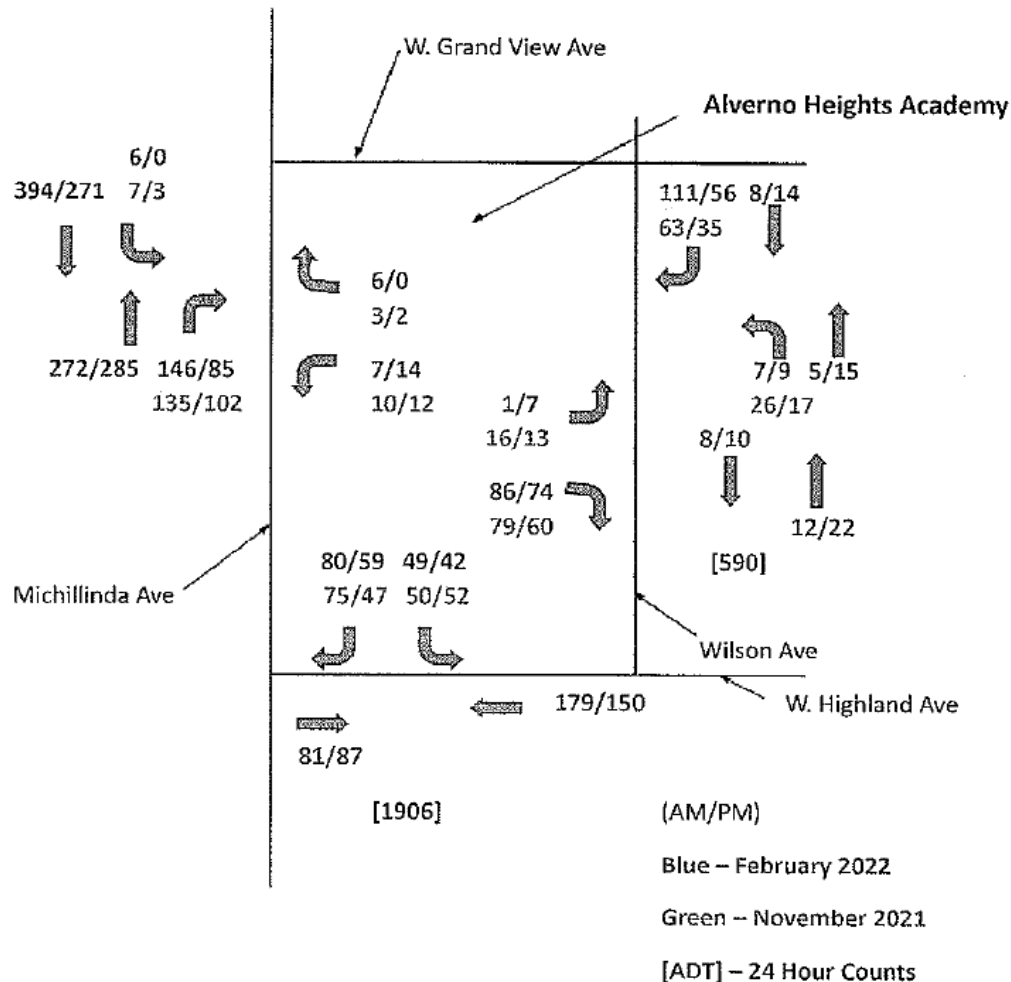
The workshops were held on:

- January 24, 2022
  - April 4, 2022
  - May 23, 2022
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Participant questions were captured in the meeting minutes included in Tab 1 in the Master Plan Supplemental Documents.

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# FEB. 2021/NOV. 2022 IN PERSON TRAFFIC ANALYSIS



- Conducted when in-person learning resumed
  - The counts were conducted on weekdays
  - February counts were taken over a three-day period; Enrollment at the school was 374 students including after-school events
- ❖ ***Live counts result in no significant traffic impact at study intersections.***
  - ❖ ***Results were less than that predicated by the Traffic Simulation Model.***

# UPDATED 2022 TRAFFIC NOISE ANALYSIS

## Master Plan Update:

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Not expected to induce a considerable change in traffic noise around the project area.

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Upper School change in enrollment **decreases the total daily vehicle trips** by 96 vehicles, a decrease of **approximately 12%**.

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**Lower School Vehicle trips** for **AM drop-off** and **PM pickup** are **less than a 3%** increase due to change in enrollment.

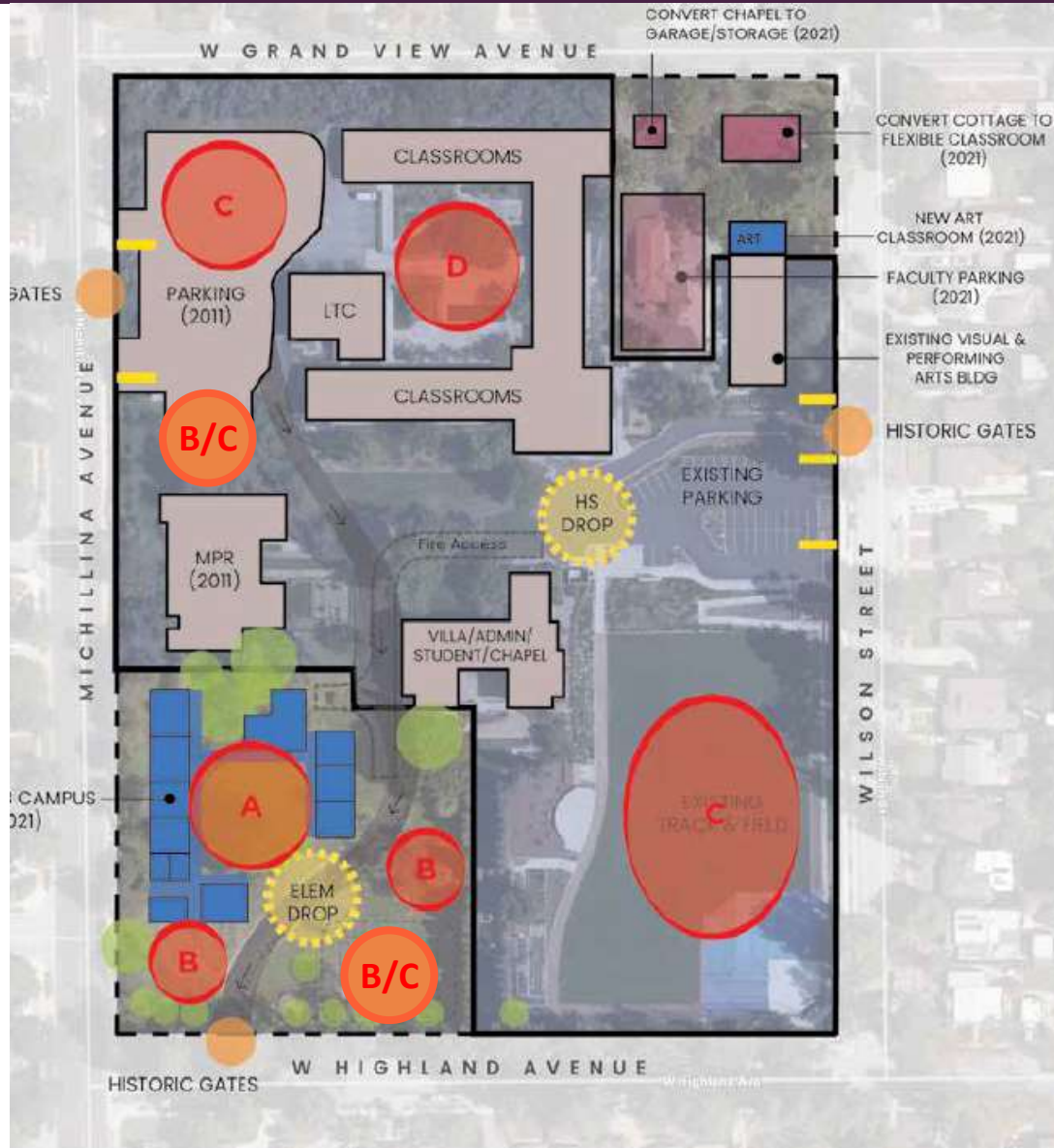
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This accounts for a **composite noise level increase of less than 1 decibel**.

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# 2021-2022 SCHOOL NOISE SOURCE ANALYSIS



CSDA monitored in-person noise levels including the Michillinda Parking lot.

Studies determined that noise levels from school operations remain consistent with Mitigation Measures of the 2011 IS/MND.

## Noise Source Legend

- “A” Elementary school lunch area
- “B” Elementary school play Area
- “C” After-school sports events
- “D” Upper School lunch area

# MICHILLINDA PARKING LOT





# TEMPORARY SPORTS COURT



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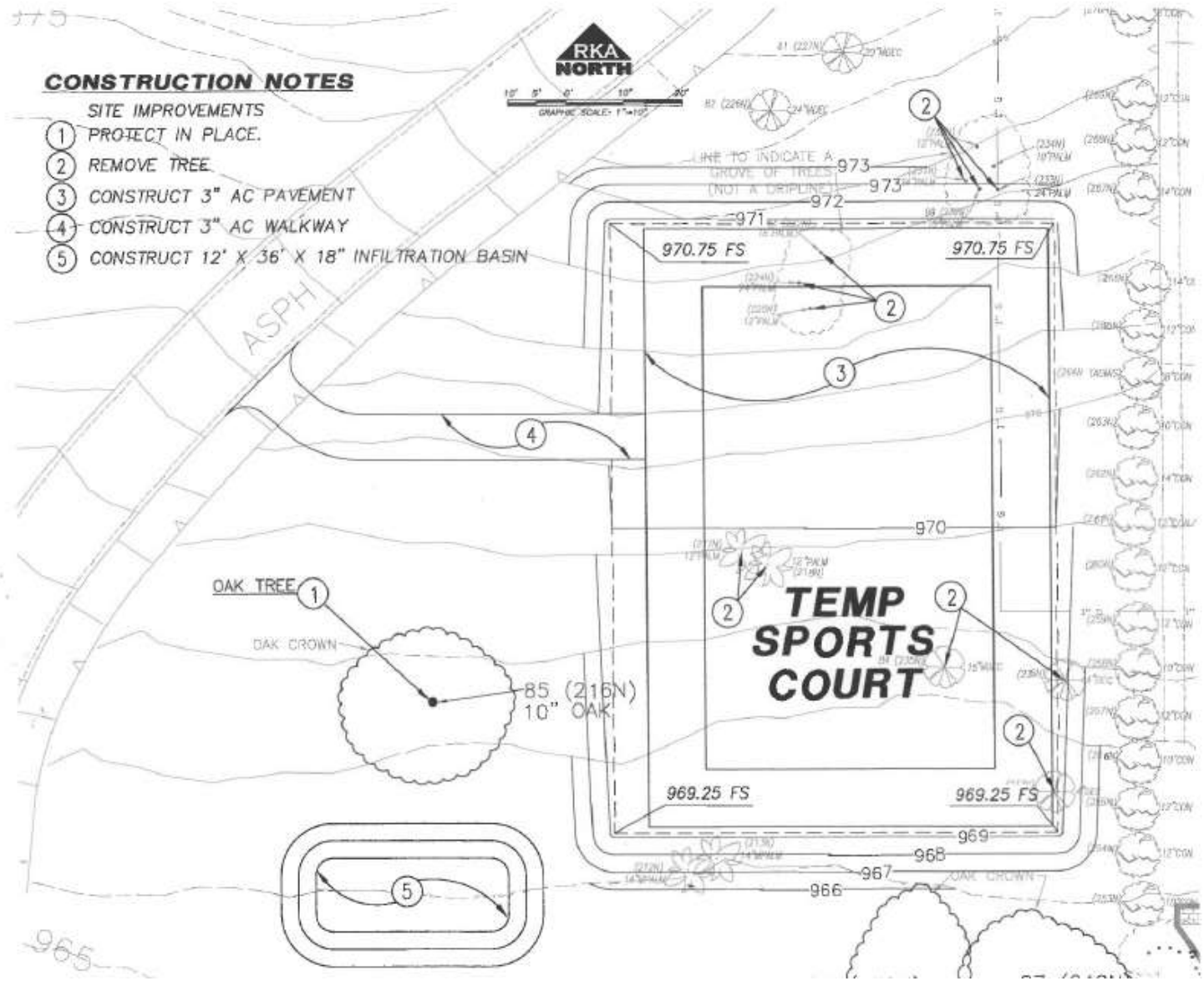
Commission requested AHA to expedite construction of the Playground and Sport Court

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Improvements to be completed within 18 months from CUP approval

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# TEMPORARY SPORTS COURT



## **Proposed Use Restrictions on Michillinda Parking Lot**

- Michillinda Parking Lot shall be for parking, student lunch recess, and sports team activities
- There shall be no nighttime games, play, or sports practices
- There shall be no amplification for games, play, or sports practices
- The lot may be used for school-related assemblies, dedications, and fundraising activities with use of amplified sound subject to the Sierra Madre Noise Ordinance, with loudspeakers facing internal to the campus
- The Parking Lot shall not be used for non-school events, with the exception of civic organizations and permitted photography and filming under Chapter 5.36 of the Sierra Madre Municipal Code

# STRENGTHEN THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

## Section 17.38.040(C) – Consistency with the General Plan

### CUP Finding # 5

The proposed project is consistent with the General Plan Objective L36 which provides for the development of private institutional uses in areas where institutional uses currently exist and ensure that they are compatible with and complement adjacent land uses.”

*Objective Hz14 – of the General Plan (Hazard Preservation) desires to “**Maintain the quiet residential character of the City, free from excessive noise from transportation or fixed source generators.**”* A discretionary review of this project includes mitigation measures intended to reduce noise impacts including **temporary construction noise**. Additionally, the conditional use permit’s conditions of approval seek to **limit the number of students, prohibit concurrent events on-site, impose new filming and temporary use standards at the school, and facilitate the development of a temporary Lower Sports Court to help reduce noise impacts.**

*Policy Hz14.1 Formulates measures to mitigate noise sources through compatible land use planning and the discretionary review of development projects.* Building construction would attenuate noise from midday elementary school lunch/break periods. As with the approved project, the **operational noise levels** of the refined project are estimated to not exceed any of the existing ambient noise levels at nearby residential receivers.



# CUP AND MASTER PLAN FINDINGS SUMMARY

*Master Plan Findings – Section 17.38.040*

*Modification to Development Standards – Section 17.38.050*

*Conditional Use Permit – Section 17.60.040*

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1. Mitigation measures and conditions protect surrounding and adjacent properties, including limits on enrollment and use of school facilities.

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  2. The Master Plan preserves significant open space, with over six acres, or 57% of the campus dedicated to open space and recreation.

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  3. The proposed use is adequate in size, situated on a 12.10-acre campus.

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  4. Parking is accessible from Michillinda Avenue and Wilson Street. Egress for lower school drop-off is from Highland Avenue.
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# CUP AND MASTER PLAN FINDINGS SUMMARY

*Conditional Use Permit – Section 17.60.040*

*Master Plan Findings – Section 17.38.040*

*Modification to Development Standards – Section 17.38.050*

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5. The Master Plan will decrease traffic on Highland Avenue, Wilson Street and Grand View due to changes in school enrollment.

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  6. The Master Plan exceeds the City's parking codes.

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  7. The Villa will continue to be preserved as a major historic resource for the City and Alverno including preservation of the Villa's three historic gates, the caretaker's home and the former garage/stable.

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# CUP AND MASTER PLAN FINDINGS SUMMARY

*Conditional Use Permit – Section 17.60.040*

*Master Plan Findings – Section 17.38.040*

*Modification to Development Standards – Section 17.38.050*

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9. Pedestrian and vehicle entrances to the campus will be maintained, and updated perimeter landscaping will improve the pedestrian character surrounding the campus.

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  10. The concept architecture for the new buildings will be differentiated from the Villa's materials and design.

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  11. A project condition is imposed that as each phase of development is implemented, the applicant and property owner shall submit plans for conformity review with the approved Master Plan, General Plan objectives and zoning standards and will be reviewed by staff and the Planning Commission.
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# ALTERNATIVES

1. Affirm the action of the Planning Commission approving Conditional Use Permit 21-03 (CUP 21-03), Planning Commission Resolution 21-19, and an Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), to update the Alverno Heights Academy Master Plan pursuant to City Council Resolution 23-13;
2. Modify the action of the Planning Commission to strengthen the administrative record and approve Conditional Use Permit 21-03 (CUP 21-03), and the Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), to update the Alverno Heights Academy Master Plan pursuant to City Council Resolution 23-13;
3. Refer the matter back to the planning commission providing staff and the applicant with direction, or
4. Deny Conditional Use Permit 21-03 directing staff to prepare a City Council Resolution citing the reasons and findings for denial.



# RECOMMENDATION

Modify the action of the Planning Commission to strengthen the administrative record and approve Conditional Use Permit 21-03, and the Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), to update the Alverno Heights Academy Master Plan pursuant to City Council Resolution 23-13.



**Thank you.**