

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
FINDINGS OF THE HEARING OFFICER
AND ORDER
PROJECT NO. PRJ2021-000954-(2)
CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. RPPL2020009547

RECITALS

1. **HEARING DATE.** The Los Angeles County (“County”) Hearing Officer conducted a duly noticed public hearing in the matter of Conditional Use Permit No. **RPPL2020009547** (“CUP”) on March 17, 2026.
2. **HEARING PROCEEDINGS.** *Reserved.*
3. **ENTITLEMENT REQUESTED.** The permittee, Green Dot Public Schools (“Permittee”), requests the CUP to authorize continued operation and maintenance of an existing public charter high school (“Project”) on a property located at 11100-11130 South Western Avenue in the unincorporated community of West Athens-Westmont (“Project Site”) in the Connect Southwest LA Transit-Oriented District Specific Plan’s (“CSLA SP’s”) NC (Neighborhood Commercial) Zone pursuant to Los Angeles County Code (“County Code”) Section 22.416.080.B (Use Regulations for CSLA NC Zone).
4. **ENTITLEMENT REQUIRED.** The CUP is required to authorize a public charter school use in the CSLA SP’s NC Zone pursuant to County Code Section 22.416.080.B (Use Regulations for CSLA NC Zone).
5. **LOCATION.** The Project is located at 11100-11130 South Western Avenue within the West Athens-Westmont Zoned District and Metro Planning Area.
6. **PREVIOUS ENTITLEMENTS.**

CASE NO.	REQUEST	DATE OF ACTION
Plot Plan (“PP”) No. 10522	Authorize a building addition on the northern lot.	Approved on October 15, 1968
Conditional Use Permit (“CUP”) No. 1014	Authorize oil well drilling on the southern lot.	Approved on April 6, 1977
CUP No. 96-195	Authorize an auto service training center on the northern lot.	Approved on April 30, 1997
PP No. 30881	Authorize a new school on the southern lot.	Approved on July 27, 2004
CUP No. 200500015	Authorize a change of use from an auto service training center to a school on the northern lot.	Approved on November 16, 2005

PP No. 200601952	Authorize school signage on the southern lot.	Approved on January 3, 2007
Revised Exhibit "A" No. 201100186	Authorize new modular classroom buildings and a new lunch canopy on the northern lot.	Approved on August 18, 2011
Ministerial Site Plan Review No. RPPL2016000748	Authorize a new school classroom and office building on the northern lot.	Approved on February 1, 2016
Yard Modification No. RPPL2017009643	Authorize a new eight-foot-tall fence within the required yards on both lots.	Approved on April 11, 2018

7. **LAND USE DESIGNATION.** The Project Site is located within the P (Public and Semi-Public), CG (General Commercial), and H30 (Residential 30 – 30 Dwelling Units per Net Acre Maximum Density) land use designations of the CSLA SP Land Use Policy Map.

8. **ZONING.** The Project Site is located in the West Athens-Westmont Zoned District and is currently split-zoned IT (Public / Institutional) and NC within the CSLA SP. Pursuant to County Code Sections 22.416.080.B (Use Regulations for CSLA NC Zone) and 22.416.120.B (Use Regulations for CSLA IT Zone), a CUP is required for a school in the NC zone, while schools are permitted by-right in the IT zone.

9. SURROUNDING LAND USES AND ZONING

LOCATION	CSLA SPECIFIC PLAN LAND USE POLICY*	CLSA SPECIFIC PLAN ZONING*	EXISTING USES
NORTH	CG (General Commercial), H9 (Residential 9 – 9 Dwelling Units per Net Acre Maximum Density), H30	NC (Neighborhood Commercial), R-1 (Residential 1), R-3 (Residential 3)	Vacant commercial, single-family residences (“SFRs”), multifamily residences (“MFRs”)
EAST	H9	R-1	SFRs
SOUTH	CG, H30 (Residential 30 – 30 Dwelling Units per Net Acre Maximum Density), MU (Mixed Use)	R-3, MXD-1 (Mixed Use Development 1), NC	MFRs, restaurant, gas station
WEST	CG, H9	NC, R-1	Various commercial retail stores, SFRs

* The CUP application for the Project was deemed complete prior to the adoption of the Metro Area Plan on May 20, 2024. Pursuant to Chapter 2 (Applicability) of the County General Plan and County Code Section 22.246.020 (Applicability of Zone Changes and Ordinance Amendments), the Permittee chose to have the complete CUP application be subject to the land use policies and zoning regulations in effect at the time it was submitted on August 9, 2021.

10. PROJECT AND SITE PLAN DESCRIPTION.

A. Existing Site Conditions

The Project Site is 2.57 acres in size and consists of two legal lots. The Project Site is rectangular in shape with generally flat topography and is developed with a total of 29 classrooms and accessory uses, including an administration office, a library, and a science lab, in five detached buildings.

B. Site Access

The Project Site is accessible via South Western Avenue to the west and West 111th Street to the north. Primary access to the Project Site will be via an entrance/exit on South Western Avenue. Secondary access to the Project Site will be via the alley on West 111th Street.

C. Site Plan

The site plan depicts the Project Site spanning two legal lots. The northern lot has two permanent classroom buildings, two modular classroom buildings, and a covered lunch shelter structure. The southern lot has one permanent classroom building. In these buildings, there are 29 classrooms, an administration office, a library, and a science lab.

All 46 vehicle parking spaces are located on the southern lot, towards the rear of the lot and accessible via the alley. Parking spaces are for use by staff only because students are not permitted to drive to and park at the school. The site plan depicts circulation for student drop-off and pick-up, with cars entering from South Western Avenue, then entering and turning around the parking lot before exiting back onto South Western Avenue using the same driveway.

D. Parking

The Project Site includes a total of 46 existing vehicle parking spaces, comprised of 44 standard-sized spaces and two (2) spaces accessible to persons with disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”). Pursuant to County Code Section 22.112.070 (Required Parking Spaces), one (1) parking space is required for each classroom plus one (1) parking space per five (5) persons based on the occupant load of the auditorium or largest assembly room. There are 29 existing classrooms and no assembly room on the Project Site, which would require 29 parking spaces. However, the Project Site is within one-half mile of the intersection of South Western Avenue and West Imperial Highway, which is a major transit stop as defined by California Public Resources Code section 21064.3. Therefore, pursuant to California Assembly Bill No. 2097 (“AB 2097”), minimum parking requirements do not apply to the Project.

11. CEQA DETERMINATION.

Prior to the Hearing Officer's public hearing on the Project, LA County Planning staff determined that the Project qualified for a Class 1, Existing Facilities, categorical exemption from the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000, et seq.) ("CEQA"), the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Environmental Document Reporting Procedures and Guidelines for the County, because the Project involves the continued operation and maintenance of an existing charter high school, which does not include any expansion in floor area. There are no exceptions to the exemption because the Project is not located in an environmentally sensitive area, there are no historical resources onsite, and the Project Site is not listed in the Department of Toxic Substances Control's list of hazardous waste or cleanup sites.

12. COMMUNITY OUTREACH. On September 27, 2025, prior to the Hearing Officer's public hearing on the Project, the Permittee conducted an open house meeting at the Project Site to inform the surrounding community about the Project. Two weeks before conducting the meeting, the Permittee mailed letters with information about the open house meeting to property owners as identified on the County Assessor's record within a 500-foot radius from the Project Site. One community member was present at the meeting.

13. PUBLIC COMMENTS. Staff did not receive any public comments before the Report to the Hearing Officer was issued on March 5, 2026.

14. AGENCY RECOMMENDATIONS.

A. County Department of Public Works: Recommended clearance to public hearing with no conditions in a letter dated June 29, 2021. The Traffic Safety and Mobility Division recommended clearance to public hearing with conditions in a letter dated May 29, 2024.

B. County Fire Department: Recommended clearance to public hearing with no conditions in a letter dated July 27, 2021.

C. County Department of Public Health: Recommended clearance to public hearing with no conditions in a letter dated September 24, 2021.

15. LEGAL NOTIFICATION. Pursuant to County Code Section 22.222.120 (Public Hearing Procedure), the community was properly notified of the public hearing by mail, newspaper (Daily Journal), and property posting. Additionally, the Project was noticed and case materials were available on LA County Planning's website. On January 29, 2026, a total of 159 Notices of Public Hearing were mailed to all property owners as identified on the County Assessor's record within a 500-foot radius from the Project Site, as well as nine (9) notices to those on the courtesy mailing list for the West Athens-Westmont Zoned District and to any additional interested parties.

GENERAL PLAN CONSISTENCY FINDINGS

16. **LAND USE POLICY.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan because the P, CG, and H30 land use designations, when a nonresidential use is proposed, are intended for community-serving uses, such as schools. The Hearing Officer further finds that the Project promotes educational and employment opportunities.

17. **GOALS AND POLICIES – GENERAL PLAN.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan:

- **Land Use Policy No. 5.4:** Encourage community-serving uses, such as early care and education facilities, grocery stores, farmers markets, restaurants, and banks to locate near employment centers.
- **Land Use Policy No. 7.1:** Reduce and mitigate the impacts of incompatible land uses, where feasible, using buffers, appropriate technology, building enclosure, and other design techniques.
- **Public Services and Facilities Goal No. 7:** A County with adequate educational facilities.
- **Economic Development Goal No. 5:** A skilled and educated workforce.

The Project is consistent with these policies of the General Plan because it preserves an existing charter high school situated in a residential neighborhood. The use has been in operation for approximately 20 years and is sufficiently buffered from residential uses by an alley and solid eight-foot-tall fencing. In addition, a new circulation plan is proposed to better mitigate impacts to the adjacent residential neighborhood during student drop-off and pick-up. The Project would maintain a community-serving use located in proximity to residences. Furthermore, the Project Site is within a quarter mile of the intersection of South Western Avenue and West Imperial Highway, and LA Southwest College. According to Chapter 6 (Land Use Element) Section III.4 (Land Use Compatibility and Distribution) of the General Plan, “complementary land uses, such as [schools] in residential neighborhoods [...] can promote a balanced distribution of jobs, housing and services.” The Project would maintain high quality education for high school students in the surrounding area, contributing to a variety of educational opportunities and youth development. According to Chapter 13 (Public Services and Facilities Element) Section VII (Early Care and Education Facilities) of the General Plan, “there is a shortage of early care and education facilities in Los Angeles County.” In consideration of these factors, approval of the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the General Plan.

18. **GOALS AND POLICIES – COMMUNITY PLAN.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the West Athens-Westmont Community Plan (“Community Plan”):

- **Land Use Goal No. 5:** To create opportunities for increased employment for area residents.

- **Land Use Goal No. 11:** To ensure land uses which contribute to the social, economic and cultural diversity of the community.
- **Economic Goal No. 3:** To increase employment opportunities, particularly among minority populations.
- **Public Facilities Policy:** Encourage enhanced public facilities and community services, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities and other municipal services.

The Project is consistent with these goals and policies of the Community Plan because it preserves an existing charter high school, which serves a multicultural student body from the surrounding area. The school contributes to a mix of community serving uses in the surrounding area, provides employment opportunities for teachers and staff, and provides educational and career opportunities for students. Therefore, approval of the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Community Plan.

19. **GOALS AND POLICIES – SPECIFIC PLAN.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Specific Plan:

- **Policy No 2.5:** Promote a mix of uses and services to support the needs of families, youth, seniors, and a growing population.
- **Policy No. 6.3:** Support safer routes to schools and parks through increased signage, lighting, landscaping, crosswalks and pedestrian connections around schools.

The Project is consistent with these goals and policies of the Specific Plan because it contributes to the mix of uses and services necessary to serve youth and families in the surrounding community. As a condition of approval for the requested increase of maximum enrollment, the Permittee will be required by the County Department of Public Works to submit a signage and striping plan for the lengthening of the right-turn lane for vehicles traveling westbound on Imperial Highway that are making a right turn onto Western Avenue. These requirements will improve vehicular safety in the immediate surroundings, contributing to safer routes to schools. Therefore, approval of the Project is consistent with the goals and policies of the Specific Plan.

ZONING CODE CONSISTENCY FINDINGS

20. **PERMITTED USE IN ZONE.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the NC and IT zoning classifications of the CSLA SP. A school is permitted in the NC Zone with a CUP pursuant to County Code Section 22.416.080.B (Use Regulations for CSLA NC Zone), while it is permitted by right in the IT Zone pursuant to County Code Section 22.416.120.B (Use Regulations for CSLA IT Zone).

21. **REQUIRED YARDS.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is not consistent with the standards identified in County Code Sections 22.416.080.C (Development Standards for CSLA NC Zone) and 22.416.120.C (Development Standards for CSLA IT Zone). The NC Zone requires a 10-foot front yard setback and a 15-foot rear yard setback, while the IT Zone requires 10-foot side and rear yard setbacks. The existing school was developed in conformance with the development standards of the C-3 and

C-2 Zones identified in County Code Section 22.20.050 (Development Standards for Zones C-H, C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-M), where no yards are required. The Project would maintain a front setback of eight feet and six inches, a corner side setback of six feet and ten inches, and a rear setback of three feet and eight inches. The northern lot and the southern lot were developed in 2005 and 2016, respectively, before the CSLA SP yard requirements became effective in 2020. Therefore, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is legal nonconforming with respect to these standards.

22. **HEIGHT.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the standard identified in County Code Section 22.348.060 (Community Wide Development Standards), which allows a maximum height of 40 feet. The maximum height on the Project Site is 23 feet and three inches, within the allowable height limit.
23. **FLOOR AREA RATIO (“FAR”).** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Sections 22.416.080.C (Development Standards for CSLA NC Zone) and 22.416.120.C (Development Standards for CSLA IT Zone), which allow a maximum FAR of 0.35 and 3.0, respectively. The southern lot zoned NC has a floor area of approximately 13,828 square feet, occupying the 49,356-square-foot lot, for a FAR of 0.28, within the allowable FAR. The northern lot zoned IT has a combined floor area of approximately 20,975 square feet, occupying the 62,450-square-foot lot, for a FAR of 0.34, within the allowable FAR.
24. **PARKING.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is exempt from the standards identified in County Code Section 22.112.070 (Required Parking Spaces), which require one (1) parking space for each classroom plus one (1) parking space per five (5) persons based on the occupant load of the auditorium or largest assembly room, or 29 spaces. Pursuant to AB 2097, because the Project Site is located less than half a mile from the intersection of South Western Avenue and West Imperial Highway, which is a major transit stop as defined in California Public Resources Code section 21064.3, minimum parking requirements do not apply to the Project. 46 parking spaces are voluntarily provided on the Project Site.
25. **BICYCLE PARKING.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Section 22.112.100.A (Required Bicycle Parking Spaces), with the recommended conditions of approval. Four (4) short-term spaces are required for every classroom, or 116 short-term spaces, and one (1) long-term space is required for every 10 classrooms, or three (3) long-term spaces. There are currently 40 short-term bike parking spaces and two (2) long-term bike parking spaces. As a condition of approval, the Permittee will be required to comply with the current minimum bicycle parking requirements, no later than two years after the date of final action on the CUP.
26. **SIGNS.** The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the standards identified in County Code Chapter 22.114 (Signs). All existing signage on the Project Site is located on the northern lot zoned IT, which is subject to signage regulations applicable to the C-1 (Restricted Commercial) Zone pursuant to County Code Sections 22.416.020.C (Relationship to Other Provisions in Title 22) and 22.26.020.C.4 (Signs). A maximum of two square feet of wall signage is allowed per linear foot of building

frontage. A maximum of 50 square feet of sign area, plus one-fourth square foot of sign area for each foot of street frontage in excess of 100 feet, is allowed for freestanding signage. The northern lot has a building frontage length of 183 feet and eight inches, and a street frontage length of 190 feet and three inches, which allows up to 367 square feet of wall signage and 72.5 square feet of freestanding signage. The western building wall on the northern lot has one existing 330-square-foot wall sign, and there is an existing double-sided 70-square-foot freestanding sign, which are within the allowable sign regulations.

27. LANDSCAPING. The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is consistent with the standard identified in County Code Section 22.416.080.C (Development Standards for CSLA NC Zone), which requires a minimum 20 percent of the lot to be landscaped, or 9,871 square feet. The Project would maintain a total of 8,261 square feet of existing landscaping across the Project Site, with the southern lot zoned NC having 3,241 square feet. The southern lot was developed in 2016, prior to the CSLA SP landscaping requirement, which became effective in 2020. Therefore, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is legal nonconforming with respect to this standard. Furthermore, the Hearing Officer finds that this standard does not apply to the Project pursuant to County Code Section 22.416.020 (Applicability) because the Project does not include any new construction, modification, addition, placement, or change of use.

28. TREE PLANTING. The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is not consistent with the standards identified in County Code Section 22.126.030 (Tree Requirements), which requires that a minimum of three (3) trees for every 10,000 square feet of developed lot area, or 11 trees, be planted. These standards also require trees to provide a minimum 50 percent (50%) shade coverage of new or expanded uncovered parking areas with 15 or more spaces. While the Project Site includes 31 existing trees, the tree planting is not arranged to provide shade coverage for the uncovered parking lot, which is currently required. The southern lot with the uncovered parking lot was developed in February 2016, prior to tree planting requirements which became effective in April 2016. Therefore, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is legal nonconforming with respect to this standard. Furthermore, the Hearing Officer finds that these standards do not apply to the Project pursuant to County Code Section 22.126.020 (Applicability) because the Project does not include any new floor area or any new uncovered parking spaces.

29. CSLA SP DESIGN GUIDELINES. The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is not consistent with County Code Chapter 22.416 (CSLA SP), which imposed areawide design guidelines, including:

- a. Adherence to one of the specified building frontage types;
- b. Building massing, modulation, articulation, and detailing guidelines;
- c. Minimum wall openings such as windows and doors; and
- d. Architectural lighting guidelines.

The northern lot and the southern lot were developed in 2005 and 2016, respectively, prior to the CSLA SP design guidelines which became effective in 2020. Therefore, the Hearing Officer finds that the Project is legal nonconforming with respect to these

standards. Furthermore, the Hearing Officer finds that these standards do not apply to the Project pursuant to County Code Section 22.416.020 (Applicability) because the Project does not include any new construction, modification, addition, placement, or change of use.

CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT FINDINGS

30. **The Hearing Officer finds that the proposed use at the site will not adversely affect the health, peace, comfort, or welfare of persons residing or working in the surrounding area; will not be materially detrimental to the use, enjoyment, or valuation of property of other persons located in the vicinity of the site; and will not jeopardize, endanger, or otherwise constitute a menace to the public health, safety, or general welfare.** The existing school has been in operation for approximately 20 years with no significant violations or reported adverse impacts to the surrounding residential neighborhood. The Project Site is sufficiently buffered from residential uses by an alley and solid fencing. The Permittee provides on-site security personnel to reduce vandalism and truancy, as well as on-site lighting along South Western Avenue and West 111th Street. The Permittee also maintains the on-site landscaping and buildings in good condition such that the school is not materially detrimental to the surrounding area.
31. **The Hearing Officer finds that the proposed site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the yards, walls, fences, parking and loading facilities, landscaping and other development features prescribed in Title 22, or as is otherwise required in order to integrate said use with the uses in the surrounding area.** The Project Site was designed in conformance with the development standards for commercial zones in effect prior to the adoption of the CSLA SP. The number of on-site parking spaces exceeds the minimum requirement under the County Code, although on-site parking is not required by State law, and the parking lot is completely screened from the street by the existing structures. The existing yards, walls, landscaping, and parking ensure that the school is a compatible use to be maintained at the Project Site, which is integrated with the surrounding area.
32. **The Hearing Officer finds that the proposed site is adequately served by highways or streets of sufficient width and improved as necessary to carry the kind and quantity of traffic such use would generate, and by other public or private service facilities as are required.** The Project Site fronts and is oriented to South Western Avenue, which is a 115-foot-wide Major Highway mapped in the County's Master Plan of Highways. The proposed circulation plan contains all vehicle queuing for student drop-off and pick-up within the Project Site, with one ingress and egress point via South Western Avenue, such that impacts to adjacent residential neighborhoods is minimized. Students are not allowed to drive to the school, and staff are required to arrive and leave the Project Site on a staggered schedule from student drop-off and pick-up.
33. The Hearing Officer finds that to ensure continued compatibility between the Project and the surrounding land uses, it is necessary to limit the CUP to 15 years.

ENVIRONMENTAL FINDINGS

34. The Hearing Officer finds that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities categorical exemption). The Project consists of the continued operation and maintenance of an existing charter high school. There are no exceptions to the exemption because the Project is not located in an environmentally sensitive area, there are no historical resources on site, and the Project Site is not listed in the Department of Toxic Substances Control's list of hazardous waste or cleanup sites.

ADMINISTRATIVE FINDINGS

35. **LOCATION OF DOCUMENTS.** The location of the documents and other materials constituting the record of proceedings upon which the Hearing Officer's decision is based in this matter is at LA County Planning, 13th Floor, Hall of Records, 320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, California 90012. The custodian of such documents and materials shall be the Section Head of the Metro Development Services Section, LA County Planning.

BASED ON THE FOREGOING, THE HEARING OFFICER CONCLUDES THAT:

- A. The proposed use with the attached conditions will be consistent with the adopted General Plan and Community Plan.
- B. The proposed use at the site will not adversely affect the health, peace, comfort or welfare of persons residing or working in the surrounding area, will not be materially detrimental to the use, enjoyment or valuation of property of other persons located in the vicinity of the site, and will not jeopardize, endanger or otherwise constitute a menace to the public health, safety or general welfare.
- C. The proposed site is adequate in size and shape to accommodate the yards, walls, fences, parking and loading facilities, landscaping and other development features prescribed in Title 22, or as is otherwise required in order to integrate said use with the uses in the surrounding area.
- D. The proposed site is adequately served by highways or streets of sufficient width and improved as necessary to carry the kind and quantity of traffic such use would generate, and by other public or private service facilities as are required.

THEREFORE, THE HEARING OFFICER:

1. Finds that the Project is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities categorical exemption); and
2. Approves **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT NO. RPPL2020009547**, subject to the attached conditions.

ACTION DATE: March 17, 2026

MG:EMR:ERS

March 5, 2026

c: Zoning Enforcement