



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 12, 2003

CONTACT: Julie Wong (Mayor), 213/978-0741
Glenn Gritzner (LAUSD), 213/241-7000
Kiara Harris (CRA), 213/977-1951
Claire Bartels (Greuel), 213/485-3391

CITY, SCHOOL DISTRICT, CRA/LA ANNOUNCE UNPRECEDENTED SCHOOL SITE SELECTION AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION AGREEMENT

LOS ANGELES – Mayor Jim Hahn, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Superintendent Roy Romer, and other officials today announced an unprecedented collaborative effort to strategically select school sites and revitalize Los Angeles neighborhoods.

Later this week, Mayor Hahn, Superintendent Romer, Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA/LA) Chief Executive Officer Robert “Bud” Ovrom, and City Councilwoman Wendy Greuel will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the city, school district, and CRA/LA’s new collaborative effort regarding new school facilities and neighborhood revitalization. The agreement determines how LAUSD and the City will work together in the planning of LAUSD’s Phase II school construction in the City of Los Angeles.

As part of this agreement, representatives of the City of Los Angeles, LAUSD, CRA/LA, and Los Angeles neighborhoods will meet regularly and share information to help coordinate school construction projects with other public and private investment projects. The purpose of this collaborative is to maximize project benefits for neighborhoods. For example, the city can share information about problem liquor stores, vacant lots, and other places where the school district might exercise its power of eminent domain to replace problem or blighted properties with much-needed neighborhood schools.

“We agree that schools are a key part of healthy and vibrant neighborhoods, yet there has never been a formal agreement between the city and school district to work together to strategically plan where to build new schools. That changes today,” said Mayor Hahn. “This partnership takes us closer to our shared vision of a Los Angeles where every child can attend a neighborhood school and every resident can live in a thriving community.”

"With this agreement, we are showing our commitment both to building new schools and fostering economic development," said School Board President Young.

"This groundbreaking agreement is a win-win. For my District, it means that a new middle school will be under construction in a few short months; a new entertainment and retail center will follow soon after, and more expansive park space will benefit both the community and the school," said Councilwoman Wendy Greuel.

"This is another example of great partnership between the City and the School District and will further our need to bring more schools into more neighborhoods," said School Board Member Lansing, who chairs the School Facilities Committee.

"I have often said that I want our schools to be the centers of their communities," said Superintendent Romer. "By obtaining vital information from the City about its long term capital plans and working together, we can better coordinate our efforts to make sure every new school fulfills that vision."

"Each of the participating agencies -- CRA/LA, LAUSD, and the city and its many departments -- has specific missions and goals to achieve. Oftentimes these goals conflict, or at the very minimum, tend to be narrowly focused. The proposed MOU is designed to change this situation and take this opportunity to leverage scarce resources to create better communities where school development is balanced with the City's need for housing and jobs," said Ovrom.

As part of the city's commitment, Mayor Hahn has directed General Managers from eighteen city departments to map existing facilities and proposed or planned real estate and infrastructure projects. City Council offices and Neighborhood Councils will also be asked to map projects and to identify nuisance properties. These maps will be useful resources as city government, school district, and CRA/LA representatives work together to strategically site new schools.

The school district has agreed to provide the city and CRA/LA with online access to information about areas of the city that have the greatest need for new schools, staff school site recommendations, and the status of school development projects. The school district has also committed to participate in a variety of City-sponsored initiatives to coordinate planning among a variety of entities. Finally, the School District will pursue joint use projects, siting schools near other community amenities such as parks and libraries whenever possible.

The LAUSD Board of Education is scheduled to consider the agreement on Tuesday, May 13. The Community Redevelopment Agency Commission is scheduled to consider the agreement on Wednesday, May 14.

###

PHOTOS OF THE EVENT

ROBERT "BUD" OVROM AT THE PODIUM



COUNCILWOMAN GREUEL AT PODIUM



SUPERINTENDENT ROMER

