

# Wildfire Preparedness and Mitigation Overview

Wildfire risk is real for everyone working and living in California. Head-Royce recognizes the threat that wildfires pose and has for many years instituted proactive mitigation measures and robust emergency preparedness plans to ensure the safety of our students and the neighboring community. As the School looks to expand its footprint and build out the South Campus, this work will continue to evolve and mature in coordination with our partners in the city, the School community and the neighborhood.



## SOUTH CAMPUS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FINDINGS

The FEIR finds that there is no evidence that the School's expansion increases wildfire risk in the neighborhood and reaffirms the project will have less than significant environmental impacts related to wildfires and emergency evacuation. Additionally, the FEIR notes that the School is well-situated along a direct evacuation route and that after a 20-year period of gradually increasing enrollment, the additional student population would account for a mere 4% increase in the neighborhood population likely to use Lincoln. Further, because Head-Royce is relying upon a pedestrian evacuation strategy, the School's students and staff would not add additional vehicle congestion or delay. Lastly, the project has been updated to incorporate recommendations made by wildfire experts and is adding additional measures and evacuation protocols that go above and beyond what is required. Some of these include:

- Providing a higher level of vegetation management than what is required under current City standards, thereby reducing the potential of embers being developed, further increasing the wildfire resilience of the community.
- Removing dead and dying trees near existing and planned structures and planting new fire-safe landscaping.
- Providing more unvegetated open space, roadways and pathways than currently exist, creating expansive fire breaks.
- Installing modern fire protection systems in existing on-site buildings included in the expansion.
- Using fire-resistive construction materials as required by the California Building and Fire Codes in the construction of new and renovated buildings.

## INCREASED STUDENT POPULATION AND TRAFFIC IMPACTS

The South Campus is located on a major traffic artery and in an area of Oakland that is developed with a network of wider residential streets with easy access to several highways. This means that there is very little likelihood of bottlenecks in the occurrence of a mass evacuation. The EIR confirmed that the project will not measurably exacerbate traffic if mass evacuation of the neighborhood is needed in case of wildfire, which is critical to both the Head-Royce evacuation plan as well as the greater community's safety.

## SITE HISTORY

It's important to note that the proposed South Campus expansion site will replace the Lincoln Child Center (LCC), a residential program that safely served as a treatment center for at-risk youth on this property for 80 years. The project proposes to replace the LCC population (estimated to be approximately 220 people during daytime hours and 75 people during nighttime hours) with a daytime-only population of approximately 150 students and 23 faculty/staff, meaning the initial impact will actually be less than the LCC

population. Even with a modest increase of roughly three students per year (calculated as 25% of the net prorated increase to the Middle and Upper School populations), the expected on-site population of 227 students and 35 faculty/staff at the end of 20 years will only be slightly larger than that of LCC's. And, with the addition of an on-property Loop Driveway, the marginal increase in the student population each year is not expected to substantially increase traffic or create bottlenecks on Lincoln Avenue or the surrounding streets if a mass evacuation of the neighborhood is required.

### PUBLIC SERVICE POWER SHUTOFFS (PSPS)

Should a PSPS occur on campus, the School will be closed for instruction during the shutdown period and no students will be allowed on campus. If the shutdown occurs while the School is in session, the Head of School will make a determination about the remainder of the school day.

PG&E will provide advance notice of a PSPS and the Disaster Safety Task Force will then convene to assess the potential threat which may include consultation with the School's professional fire safety consultant. The Task Force will, at a minimum, notify the School community of the potential danger as well as provide links to the School's emergency plan and other resources.

### KEY PLAN DETAILS

The School's current Emergency Planning Manual contains multiple elements to address concerns about traffic impacts on Lincoln Avenue in the event of a wildfire, including safety alerts and communications, delayed/diverted pickup of children during an emergency and the potential for School closures in consultation with fire authorities and other experts.

In the event of a wildfire in the area, parents will be instructed **not** to come to campus and instead to either wait for the immediate danger to subside while

students shelter in place on campus, or to reunify with their student(s) in one of two offsite locations if the decision is made to evacuate the campus (most likely on foot). This rule allows first responders better access to streets surrounding the School and ensures optimal vehicular evacuation of the neighborhood in a wildfire.

The School's updated Emergency Plan also addresses the risk of wildfire with respect to the School's K-5 and disabled populations, including assigning a higher ratio of faculty and personnel to evacuate the youngest students as well as specific faculty and personnel for disabled persons. If necessary, the School may use its six minivans to evacuate the youngest students and those with disabilities.

### CONCLUSION

The exposure of the community and structures to significant risk from wildfires is not only mitigated through several measures but the overall safety of the community and School is significantly enhanced.

Precluding re-use of an existing campus for similar educational purposes based on fears about wildfire risk is neither necessary for disaster preparedness nor good public policy. If the site is not re-used for educational reasons, it will be re-used for another purpose which would inevitably also bring additional people into the neighborhood, potentially in a much less controlled fashion than a K-12 school. The School brings only a daytime population onto the South Campus, which will initially include a smaller population than that of the LCC's at its peak capacity. When fully enrolled at the end of 20 years, the impact on the site represents an approximate 5% increase. Head-Royce will continue to take responsible steps to protect the School community and to be a good neighbor in the event of a major fire event. This project does not create an unacceptable fire risk, and the reuse of the campus should be allowed.

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For questions or concerns regarding Head-Royce Emergency Planning, please contact:

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