

United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) Pilot Program – Green Spaces Recommendations

After decades of repaving practices from the 1960s and 1970s, the United Teachers Los Angeles (UTLA) approves of Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD) efforts in its variety of initiatives and programs to create and develop gardens and green spaces on school sites. Gardens and green space enrich student health, enhance school curriculum, and improve the local environment. In particular, greening projects that include planting trees, combat the negative effects of climate change by offsetting greenhouse gas emissions, reducing erosion through capturing rainwater, and improving air quality. UTLA recognizes that LAUSD greening projects require coordination within their own departments following the "LAUSD School Design Guide" as well as cooperation across multiple municipalities and community based organizations.

UTLA and LAUSD agreed to create a Green Space Task Force in their Collective Bargaining Agreement signed in January 2019. The agreement states that LAUSD will work with "UTLA, the City of Los Angeles, the County of Los Angeles and appropriate non-profit partners in an effort to create to the maximum extent possible, adequate green space for student physical activity." The agreement includes a greening priority rating for schools and possible funding sources and also states that the "Facilities Services Division will continue with the goals as listed in the Strategic Execution Plan that involves the removal of unused bungalows."

The agreement states that the task force will present a plan to the Board of Education by December 1, 2019. The Task Force missed that deadline but met throughout 2019, including three times between November 6, 2019 and December 16, 2019 when the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department created a greening priority list as delineated by the agreement between UTLA and LAUSD and LAUSD provided a list of bungalow/portable planned removals.

UTLA recommends the following steps for increasing green space for student physical activity to the maximum extent possible:

- 1) LAUSD will work with the City of Los Angeles on their existing Community School Parks program and create green space with active recreation and outdoor classrooms in, at a minimum, twenty-five (25) locations by 2025.
- 2) LAUSD will double the funding for the successful SEEDS program. This should result in, at least, an additional fifty (50) projects as "greening ready" sites. These sites will be selected through an equity algorithm to ensure greening in the neediest areas.
- 3) In addition to the above, LAUSD and UTLA will collectively agree and select schools to green seven (7) additional elementary or middle schools per year for three years, 2020, 2021 and 2022 for a total of twenty-one (21) new green space developments. These developments will be created for active recreation and outdoor classroom and modeled after the elements at Malabar St. ES, Eagle Rock ES, and John Fremont High School. For these, some focus will be given to schools outside LA City boundaries but within LAUSD boundaries.

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- 4) The priority list created by the City of Los Angeles Recreation and Parks Department will contribute in all the site selections outlined above.
- 5) UTLA reinforces and reiterates that the bungalow removal must be added into the calculus of greening priorities. Based on information from LAUSD, there are six hundred, eighty-two (682) planned removals among the total six thousand, six hundred, forty-eight existing bungalows/portables. Of the 682 unused bungalows/portables, three hundred, seventy-one (371) bungalows/portables are dedicated for instruction and sit on eighty-one (81) different campuses. Additionally, once bungalows/portables are removed, UTLA recommends that these spaces are replaced by green space or at least paved permeable surfaces.

The onus of fulfilling the green space task force priorities, including all of the costs, rests on LAUSD. We estimate the costs of fulfilling the first three steps of our recommendations at \$8.35M over five years or approximately \$1.67M annually. UTLA will partner with LAUSD and the City of Los Angeles on all of the previously mentioned Propositions and Measures delineated in the Green Space Task Force agreement, as well as future grant opportunities. UTLA also stresses the importance of partnerships with community and non-profit organizations in developing and designing green spaces at our schools.

Once the Green Space Task Force sunsets upon a completion of a plan approved by the LAUSD Board of Education as stated in the Collective Bargaining Agreement Memorandum of Understanding, UTLA proposes a new task force will be created to ensure the coordination, implementation, and evaluation of the Green Space resolution.