



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT AND  
NOTICE OF SCOPING MEETING FOR**

**WEST CONTRA COSTA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT  
CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION OF THE CASTRO ELEMENTARY  
SCHOOL TO REPLACE THE PORTOLA MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT**

**DATE:** February 22, 2008

**TO:** Responsible Agencies, Agencies with Jurisdiction by Law, Trustee Agencies, Involved Federal Agencies, and Agencies/People Requesting Notice

**FROM:** West Contra Costa Unified School District  
Facilities Planning and Construction  
Attn: William Savidge, District Engineering Officer  
1300 Potrero Avenue  
Richmond, CA, 94804

The West Contra Costa Unified School District (Lead Agency) will prepare an EIR for the proposed West Contra Costa Unified School District Construction and Renovation of the Castro Elementary School to Replace the Portola Middle School Project.

**Project Location:** The project site contains the entirety of the existing Castro Elementary School campus, the Cameron School campus, and the existing Castro Park, which is a park operated by the City of El Cerrito via a joint-use agreement with the District. The entire project site is owned by the District and is bounded by Gladys Avenue, Lawrence Street, Donal Avenue, and Norvell Street. The associated project address is 7125 Donal Avenue, El Cerrito, CA 94530.

**Project Description:**

The proposed project involves the following primary component:

- The closure of the existing Castro Elementary School and campus from active use and the new construction and renovations at the existing Castro Elementary School and campus for use as a Middle School.

The work at the site would require demolition of some existing buildings and portables, new construction, and renovation of the existing main Castro Elementary School buildings; including the kindergarten building, which will be the subject of a historic resources evaluation.

A conceptual site plan has been prepared that indicates site work would be on the southern side of the project site and that the Castro Park and the Cameron School portions of the project site would not have any physical changes. At project completion, the project site would host the Middle School, the existing Cameron School, and Castro Park. The locations of access, parking, and play areas on the southern portion of the project site would be changed. New buildings would host a gymnasium, library, administration, and classrooms. All new buildings would be constructed below the ridge to minimize visual impacts. Grading and drainage will be modified.

---

**Notice of Preparation and Notice of Scoping Meeting for the  
WCCUSD Construction and Renovation of the Castro Elementary School to Replace the Portola  
Middle School Project**

The proposed project involves the following additional components:

- The relocation of Castro Elementary School students to other District sites, and
- The closure of the Portola Middle School buildings and campus from active use.

At this time, the closure of Castro Elementary School and the placement of these elementary school students at other District sites is not expected to bring enrollment beyond existing capacities at other District schools, require any physical changes or increase demands for public services at other District schools, or necessitate an internal attendance boundary change. Reassignment of Castro Elementary School students has been a point of discussion at recent District Board meetings. However, the District has not developed a student reassignment plan at this time, and the issue of student reassignment will be discussed on a programmatic level in the EIR.

At this time, the future disposition of the Portola Middle School buildings and campus has not been determined by the District. The buildings and campus could be closed from active use without environmental review. However, it is valuable to the District and community to consider the potential environmental impacts of building demolition. The District could also dispose of (sell) the property as is without demolishing the buildings. This topic will be discussed on a programmatic level in the EIR.

The proposed project also involves the following potential components. The following components will be discussed on a programmatic level in the EIR:

- The potential administrative act of adjusting elementary school attendance boundaries to accommodate the reassignment of Castro Elementary School students as noted above, if it is determined that an attendance boundary adjustment is necessary, and
- The potential temporary housing for Portola Middle School students, in the event that the Board decides to relocate the students prior to construction of the new middle school at the Castro site.

Based on the project description and the Lead Agency's understanding of the environmental setting and potential impacts associated with the project, the following topics are expected to be analyzed in detail in the EIR:

- Aesthetics
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural/Historic Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Hazards/Hazardous Materials/Human Health/Risk of Upset
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Public Services/Utilities/Service Systems/Recreation

---

**Notice of Preparation and Notice of Scoping Meeting for the  
WCCUSD Construction and Renovation of the Castro Elementary School to Replace the Portola  
Middle School Project**

- Transportation/Traffic/Circulation/Parking

For a more detailed description of the proposed project and discussion of environmental impacts related to the proposed project, please refer to the Initial Study that can be found on the Local Agency's website: <http://www.wccusd.k12.ca.us/index.shtml>. Copies of the Initial Study will also be made available at the District Office at: 1300 Potrero Avenue, Richmond, CA, 94804.

The Lead Agency solicits comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR from all interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, and involved agencies. Please send your written/typed comments (including contact name) to the following:

West Contra Costa Unified School District  
 Facilities Planning and Construction  
 Attn: William Savidge, District Engineering Officer  
 1300 Potrero Avenue  
 Richmond, CA, 94804

Due to the time limits mandated by California law, written comments must be sent at the earliest possible date, but no later than **March 22, 2008**.

**Notice of Scoping Meeting:** Pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 21087.7, 21083.9, and 21092.2, the Lead Agency will conduct a public scoping meeting for the same purpose of soliciting oral and written comments from interested parties requesting notice, responsible agencies, agencies with jurisdiction by law, trustee agencies, and involved federal agencies, as to the appropriate scope and content of the EIR. The scoping meeting will be held on **March 10, 2008 from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM** at the following location:

Castro Elementary School – Multi-Purpose Room  
 7125 Donal Avenue  
 El Cerrito, CA, 94530

For additional information, please contact William Savidge at (510) 307-4544 or (510) 812-0604.

X  Date: 2/20/08

William Savidge  
 District Engineering Officer