

# Los Angeles Unified School District

## Office of Environmental Health and Safety

**ALBERTO M. CARVALHO**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**CARLOS A. TORRES**  
*Director, Environmental Health and Safety*

**JENNIFER FLORES**  
*Deputy Director, Environmental Health and Safety*

### NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PLACE  
"FILED"  
STICKER  
HERE

ORIGINAL FILED  
MAY 18 2022  
LOS ANGELES, COUNTY CLERK  
PLACE  
"POSTED"  
STICKER

**To:** County Clerk and Registrar-Recorder  
County of Los Angeles  
12400 Imperial Highway  
Norwalk, CA 90650

**From:** LAUSD OEHS  
333 S. Beaudry Avenue  
21<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

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**Project Title:**

Esperanza Elementary School Greening Project

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**Project Location – Specific:**

The Esperanza Elementary School Greening Project (Project) will be located on the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD's or District's) approximately 5-acre Esperanza Elementary School (ES) campus (Campus). The Campus is located at 680 Little Street in the City of Los Angeles. The Campus is located in an urbanized community primarily consisting of commercial uses and multi-family residences. The District's John Liechty Middle School is located immediately east of the Campus across Union Avenue.

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**Project Location – City:**

Los Angeles

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**Project Location – County:**

Los Angeles

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**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The Project will entail the removal of 23,481 square feet of asphalt from the Campus and replaced with plants to create a new habitat, 27 California native trees, and outdoor learning opportunities. The Project will include stormwater capture and infiltration in strategic areas around the Campus; tree planting adjacent to existing classroom bungalows to reduce building energy use; new outdoor classroom areas and enhanced play areas; and interpretive elements to support outdoor learning.

There will be no increase in capacity, enrollment or intensity of use as a result of the Project. The Project will be constructed per Division of State Architect (DSA) approved design specifications. The Project will be implemented pursuant to all applicable State, federal, and local regulations and all applicable LAUSD specifications, standards, and/or guidelines, including those in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the updated Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade,

and Improvements Projects as adopted by the Board of Education in February 2019.<sup>1</sup> The beneficiaries of this Project include the District's students and staff as well as families, school supporters and the community at large who may request access to the facilities and grounds pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code §§38130-38139).

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**Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:**

Los Angeles Unified School District

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**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:**

Los Angeles Unified School District

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**Exempt Status: (check one below)**

- ☐ Ministerial [Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines Section 15268<sup>2</sup>]:
- ☐ Declared Emergency [PRC Section 21080(b)(3); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(a)]:
- ☐ Emergency Project [PRC Section 21080(b)(4); CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(b)(c)]:
- ☒ Categorical Exemption (PRC Section 21084; CEQA Guidelines Sections 15300 -15333):
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15301 – Existing Facilities*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land*
- ☐ Statutory Exemption:

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

Section 15301 – Existing Facilities

Class 1 consists of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features involving negligible or no expansion of use beyond that existing at the time of the lead agency's determination.

The Project will remove and replace asphalt from the existing Campus with plants and trees in order to create new habitat and outdoor learning opportunities. The Project will be constructed completely within existing areas on the Campus and will not require or result in the expansion of use beyond these areas. The Project constitutes repair, maintenance, and minor alterations to existing facilities that result in no expansion of use. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land

Class 4 consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry and agricultural purposes.

The Project will involve minor alterations to land including the removal of asphalt and its replacement with green features (i.e., trees, plants, etc.) on the Campus. The Project area does not contain any trees or vegetation. As such, the removal of trees will not be required as a part of the Project. The Project will include the installation of trees and plants. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15304.

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<sup>1</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on February 2019.

<sup>2</sup> CEQA Guidelines can be found at California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 – Section 15387

### Section 15300.2 – Exceptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines, Exceptions, provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. Review of these projects indicates that they would not violate any of the exceptions, as described below.

1. *The Project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments or locations;*

The Project will be located on a fully developed site that is situated within a highly urbanized community. The Project site has not been designated as a biologically sensitive site or location and does not contain sensitive resources or habitat that will be impacted by the Project.<sup>3</sup> The Project site is located approximately 10 miles west of the nearest sensitive environment, critical habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher (*polioptila californica californica*).<sup>4</sup> As such, the Project will not impact sensitive environments or locations.

2. *Cumulative impacts would be considerable because successive Project of the same type would occur at the same place over time;*

Currently, there are no other successive projects of the same type planned at the Campus during the same construction period.<sup>5</sup> All known activities that will occur on the Campus during the same construction period have been discussed in the Project description. The Project will not have the potential to result in significant impacts that will be considered cumulatively considerable. Therefore, no cumulative impacts will be expected to result from the site modifications associated with the Project.

3. *There is a reasonable possibility that the activity would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.*

There are no known unusual circumstances that would have a significant effect on the environment. The Project will include minor ground-disturbing activities. The Project will require exporting approximately 300 cubic yards of soil and importing approximately 150 cubic yards of soil. These activities are not considered unusual circumstances for the classes of projects under which an exemption is claimed. Nevertheless, consideration must be given to the management of pavement removal and excavated soils associated with earthwork activities for the Project. The Project involves the removal of pavement, which requires soil sampling and testing for characterization prior to removal. Excavated soils will only be reused onsite if they are placed beneath paved areas.

OEHS must be notified to provide oversight of any import or export of soils and materials to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the requirements of District Specification 01 4524 and other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.<sup>6</sup> Soil sampling was conducted within the Project area. As a result of the sampling, it was determined that compliance with South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1466 was not required. A Soil Sampling Determination for Rule 1466 Compliance memorandum was prepared for the Project to document these findings.<sup>7</sup>

As set forth in SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-9, SC-CUL-10, and SC-CUL-11 of the Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects as adopted by the Board of Education in February 2019, and in District protocols, construction activities must be stopped immediately and OEHS notified upon discovery of subsurface features, such as buried resources (i.e., paleontological resources, archaeological resources), tanks or seepage pits, or stained/odoriferous

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<sup>3</sup> City of Los Angeles. Zimas. <http://zimas.lacity.org/>. Accessed May 2022.

<sup>4</sup> US Fish and Wildlife. FWS Maps. Available at: <http://fws.maps.arcgis.com/home/webmap/viewer.html>. Accessed May 2022.

<sup>5</sup> LAUSD. Facilities Services Division, Facilities Initiatives. Available at: <http://mo.laschools.org/fis/existing-facilities/m-and-o/ef-projects/project-segments?locn=8557>. Accessed May 2022.

<sup>6</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", available at: [http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file\\_id=219798234&show\\_all\\_versions\\_p=t](http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t)

<sup>7</sup> LAUSD. 2018. Determination Rule for 1466 Compliance. Los Angeles, CA.

soils.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

4. *The Project may result in damage to scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a state scenic highway;*

The closest officially designated scenic highway is State Route 27 (SR 27), which is located approximately 12 miles north/northeast of the Campus.<sup>10</sup> The Campus is not visible from SR 27 and the Project does not involve alterations to the Campus that would have the potential to damage scenic resources. Therefore, the Project will not be expected to result in damage to scenic resources or similar resources within a highway officially designated as a State scenic highway.

5. *The Project is located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code; or*

The Project is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, the Project would have no impacts related to being located on a hazardous waste site.

6. *The Project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.*

Built in 1993, Esperanza ES Campus is over 45 years old, meeting LAUSD's threshold for review as a potential historic resource and requiring evaluation for historic eligibility. However, LAUSD's Historic Resource Specialist determined that Esperanza ES is ineligible as a historic resource.<sup>12</sup> Research did not reveal any significant association between the Campus and the development of alternative educational approaches or any other historical events or personages significant to national, state, or local history. Therefore, the Project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.

Prepared By:

Christy Wong  
CEQA Project Manager/Contract Professional

Phone and Email:

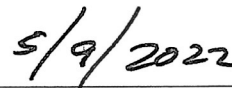
(213) 241-3394  
cp-christy.wong@LAUSD.net

Signed by:



Carlos A. Torres,  
CEQA Officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District

Date:



<sup>8</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on February 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> California Department of Transportation. California Scenic Highway Mapping System. Available at: [http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16\\_livability/scenic\\_highways/index.htm](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm). Accessed May 2022.

<sup>11</sup> Department of Substances Control. 2021. Cortese List. [http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese\\_List.cfm](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm). Accessed May 2022.

<sup>12</sup> LAUSD OEHS. 2021. LAUSD Historic Resource Inventory Database.



Dean C. Logan  
Los Angeles County Registrar / Recorder  
12400 Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA  
(800)201-8999

BUSINESS FILINGS REGISTRATION

NORWALK DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTER

Cashier: L. MCCOY



Wednesday, May 18, 2022 1:31 PM

Item(s)

Fee	Qty	Total
NoE - County Posting Fee 2022108747	1	\$75.00

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<b>Total</b>		<b>\$75.00</b>
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Total Documents: 1

Customer payment(s):

Check	\$75.00
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Check List:

#3925	\$75.00
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