

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

THIS NOTICE WAS POSTED	
ON	December 08 2023
UNTIL	January 08 2024
REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK	

2023 263761

FILED
Dec 08 2023
Deen C. Logan, Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk
Electronically signed by VALERIE VALADEZ

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

From: LAUSD OEHS
333 S. Beaudry Avenue
21st Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Project Title:

ELOP (Expanded Learning Opportunities Program) Greening Projects at Eleven (11) LAUSD Campuses

Project Location – Specific:

- 109th Street Elementary School, 10915 McKinley Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90059
- 118th Street Elementary School, 144 E 118th St., Los Angeles, CA 90061
- Belvedere Elementary School, 3724 E First St., Los Angeles, CA 90063
- Capistrano Elementary School, 8118 Capistrano Ave., West Hills, CA 91304
- Coldwater Canyon Elementary School, 6850 Coldwater Canyon Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91605
- Florence Griffith Joyner Elementary School, 1963 E 103rd St., Los Angeles, CA 90002
- Morris K Hamasaki Medical/Science Magnet, 4865 E First St., Los Angeles, CA 90022
- Marianna Avenue Elementary School, 4215 E Gleason St., Los Angeles, CA 90063
- Russell Elementary School, 1263 E Firestone Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90001
- Stoner Avenue Elementary School, 11735 Braddick D., Culver City, CA 90230
- Wilton Place Elementary School, 745 S Wilton Pl., Los Angeles, CA 90005

Project Location – City:

Various

Project Location – County:

Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) provides funding for afterschool enrichment programs for K-6th grades. The District has allocated \$40 million in funding in Fiscal Year 2024 from this program to spend on trees and greening projects (Projects). The first phase of ELOP funded Projects will be implemented at 11 school sites throughout the District. In general, the scope will be the design and

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Our Mission: To ensure a safe and healthy environment for students to learn, teachers to teach, and employees to work.
Our Vision: To eliminate all environmental health and safety risks at schools.



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construction of outdoor learning spaces including installation of trees, plants, natural turf, and decomposed granite. The table below describes the improvements at each campus:

School	Planting (Shrubs)	Trees	Turf	Decomposed Granite	Asphalt Removal
109th Street ES	X	X	X	X	X
118th Street ES	X	X		X	X
Belvedere ES	X	X		X	X
Capistrano ES		X			X
Coldwater Cyn ES	X	X		X	X
Florence Griffith-Joyner ES	X	X	X	X	X
Hamasaki ES	X	X	X		X
Marianna ES	X	X	X		X
Russell ES	X	X	X	X	X
Wilton Place ES	X	X		X	X
Stoner ES	X	X		X	X

Each Project site will be individually designed, but will include a mix of the following components:

- New trees and landscape in existing tree wells/ planting areas/ grass field (existing irrigation)
- New trees and landscape in existing tree wells/planting areas with new irrigation
- New grass field surrounded by trees with irrigation
- New planting area with trees and irrigation surrounding existing asphalt
- New planting area with trees and irrigation surrounding new decomposed granite

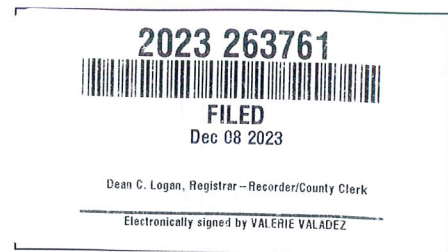
The Projects will be constructed per DSA-approved plan sets. The Projects will be implemented per all applicable local and State regulations, as well as all District Standards and Specifications; such as those provided in LAUSD's Program Environmental Impact Report for the School Upgrade Program (Program EIR).¹ The primary purpose of the Projects is to provide outdoor learning experiences, as well as provide upgrades to school building/site systems that have reached or exceeded their service life. The Projects will not cause an increase in student capacity or enrollment and would not result in an increase in the intensity of use. The beneficiaries of the Projects include students and staff at each of the respective schools and the community at large who may request access to the facilities and grounds of the campuses pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130 - 38139).

Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:

Los Angeles Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

¹ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on November 10, 2015.



Los Angeles Unified School District

Exempt Status: (check one below)

- ☐ Ministerial [Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines Section 15268²]:
- ☐ 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.

Construction of the ELOP Greening Projects will result in the planting of new trees and shrubs in areas that currently have vegetation on existing campuses. As such, the Project would constitute operation, repair, maintenance and minor alteration of existing public facilities involving no expansion of the facilities' use.

All of the proposed Project components would involve minor alterations to existing campuses and will occur within the area occupied by existing facilities at the Project sites. The Project components will not present a new or expanded use of the Project sites. Therefore, the Project constitutes minor alterations to existing school sites that result in no expansion of use and meets 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 planting of new trees and shrubs in currently vegetated areas on existing Campuses. As such, the removal of trees will not be required as a part of the Project. The Project will include the installation of new vegetation, irrigation and decomposed granite as part of the ELOP Projects. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15304.

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.

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



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

The Project sites are fully developed campuses within urbanized communities.³ None of the Project sites have been designated as biologically sensitive locations. The nearest threatened or endangered species is the Branton's milk-vetch located approximately 2 miles west of Capistrano Elementary School. The nearest sensitive environment to the Project site is the Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills, located approximately 0.69 miles north of Capistrano Elementary School.^{4,5} As such, the Project will not impact sensitive environments or locations.

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

The Campuses are active school sites and there will likely be ongoing maintenance activities and minor Projects to keep them operational. As the Projects will not result in any lasting impacts once construction is complete, they will not contribute to cumulative impacts when considered with expected successive projects.

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 upgrades associated with the Projects are comparable to other modernizations and improvements that are being completed throughout the District under the School Upgrade Program. The removal of trees is not anticipated as part of the proposed scope of work. However, should the Project be altered to include the removal of trees, LAUSD's Office of Environmental Health & Safety (OEHS) must be notified immediately. District policy requires consultation with an arborist to determine if the trees are a protected native species. Additionally, written approval from the school principal will be required before any trees can be removed. If tree removal is scheduled to occur between February 1 and August 31, a nesting bird survey would be performed prior to removal activities, per standard condition (SC) of approval SC-BIO-3 of the Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects as adopted by the Board of Education in February 2019.⁶

The Projects will include minor ground-disturbing activities. These activities are not considered unusual circumstances for the classes of projects under which an exemption is claimed. All Project related ground disturbing activities would comply with SC-AQ-1, SC-AQ-2, SC-AQ-3, and SC-AQ-4. As the Projects involve the removal of pavement, soil sampling and testing has or will be conducted and a determination memorandum will be created for all Campuses prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. Excavated soils will only be reused onsite if they are placed beneath paved areas. If construction or earthmoving activities require import or export of soils and materials, OEHS must be notified to provide oversight to ensure that these activities are conducted

³ City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, <http://zimas.lacity.org/>, accessed November 2023.

⁴ United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> accessed November 2023.

⁵ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed November 2023.

⁶ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on February 5, 2019.



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in compliance with the requirements of District Specification 01 4524, relevant provisions of South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1466, and other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.⁷ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-6, SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-10, and SC-CUL-11 of the Program EIR, 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 soils.⁸ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1 of the Program EIR.⁹ 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 designated state scenic highway is the State Route 27 (SR27), which is located approximately 9.5 miles south of Capistrano Elementary School.¹⁰ Therefore, the proposed Project will not 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*

None of the Project sites are located on sites that are included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.¹¹ Therefore, the Project will 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.*

Five of the Project sites (109th Street Elementary School, Belvedere Elementary School, Florence Griffith-Joyner Elementary School, Hamasaki Elementary School, and Wilton Place Elementary School) are listed on the California Register of Historical Resources. The Project entails the planting of new trees and shrubs in areas that currently have vegetation on existing campuses. The proposed modifications are limited to spaces that are not considered character-defining and comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation due to their compatibility and reversibility. Therefore, OEHS' Historical Preservation Specialist has determined that the Projects do not have the potential to adversely impact historical resources.

⁷ LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

⁸ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on November 10, 2015.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/, accessed November 2023.

¹¹ http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed November 2023.

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Prepared By:

Julian Capata
CEQA Project Manager/Contract Professional

Signed by:

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

Phone and Email:

(213) 241-3417
cp-julian.capata@LAUSD.net

Date:

11/30/23

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