

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 November 19 2024

UNTIL December 19 2024

REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2024 238154



FILED
Nov 19 2024

Dean C. Logan, Registrar – Recorder/County Clerk

Electronically signed by TODD TRAN

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

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

Project Title:
Northridge Academy High School – New Shade Structure

Project Location – Specific:
9601 Zelzah Avenue, Northridge, CA 91325

Project Location – City:
Los Angeles

Project Location – County:
Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The proposed Project (Project) will install a new 25ft x 40ft shade structure with four 24 -inch diameter concrete footings adjacent to the existing lunch shelter at Northridge Academy High School (Northridge Academy or Campus) (Exhibit A). The footings would be set at a depth of approximately 8.5- feet and result in the excavation of 4 cubic yards of soil. The Board of Education approved the Project’s budget of \$322,108 on October 17, 2023.

The Project will be implemented pursuant to all applicable State, federal, and local regulations and all applicable Los Angeles Unified School District (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 (SC) as adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.¹ LAUSD’s SCs, design guidelines, and best management practices are designed to be incorporated into the Project design in order to avoid or limit potential adverse impacts associated with the District’s projects.

The beneficiaries of the Project include Northridge Academy students, faculty, staff, families, school supporters, and the community at large who may request access to the Campus pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130 - 38139).

¹ LAUSD OEHS, “Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvement Projects (SCs)”
https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/135/ceqa/2023_Standard_Conditions_UPDATE_Final.pdf

333 South Beaudry Avenue, 21st Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017 • Telephone (213) 241-3199 • Fax (213) 241-6816

*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.*



Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:

Los Angeles Unified School District

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:

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 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures*
- 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 result in the installation of a new shade structure next to the existing lunch shelter. The new shade structure will address unmet Campus needs and provide students with a safe and healthy learning environment. Installation of the new shade structure will not present a new or expanded use of the Campus. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Section 1503 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 2 consists of replacing or reconstructing existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced.

The Project will result in the installation of a new shade structure next to the existing lunch shelter. The new shade structure will address unmet campus needs and provide students with a safe and healthy learning environment. Installation of the new shade structure will not result in an increase or alteration of the current use, function, or capacity of the existing Campus. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

Section 15300.2 – Exceptions

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines, Exceptions, provides conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. Review of the Project 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;*

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



The Project will occur on an existing campus that is located within an urbanized setting. The surrounding uses of the Campus are various District schools and facilities to the south and east and residential to the north and west. The site is not designated as a biologically sensitive location. The nearest significant ecological area (SEA) is Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills which are located approximately 4.5 miles north of the Campus.³ The nearest critical habitat is designated as such for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher and is located approximately 4.1 miles north of the site.⁴ 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 Campus is an active school site and there will likely be ongoing maintenance activities and minor projects on the Campus to keep the school operational. There are currently no known successive projects of the same type or scale planned for the Campus. As the Project would not result in any lasting impacts once construction of the Project is complete, the Project would not contribute to cumulative impacts when considered with expected successive projects. Therefore, no cumulative impacts will result from the Project and successive projects of the same type and at the same place over time.

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 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, the District'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. All tree trimming and removal conducted on District property is required to adhere to the procedures described in the LA Unified OEHS Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure.⁵ 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 SC-BIO-3.

The Project will include minor ground-disturbing activities. 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. As the Project involves the removal of pavement, soil sampling and testing for characterization is required prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. 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 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.⁶ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-6, SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-10, and SC-CUL-11, 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. Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1. Therefore, the Project will not have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

³ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed September 2024.

⁴ United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> accessed September 2024.

⁵ LAUSD OEHS, "Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure," <https://www.lausd.org/ceqa>

⁶ LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t



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 to the Project site is the Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway, a 2.5-mile portion of State Route 27 (SR-27), which is located approximately 12.7 miles south of the Campus.⁷ The Project will not result in the removal of historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or other scenic resources. Therefore, the 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*

The Project will occur on an existing school campus which is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.⁸ Therefore, the Project will not have an impact related to being located on a hazardous waste site.

6. *The project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.*

The LAUSD Historic Preservation Specialist determined that Northridge Academy is ineligible as an historic resource.⁹ Therefore, the Project would have no impact to a historic resource

Prepared By:

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Signed by:

Date:

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

⁷ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed September 2024.

⁸ California Department of Toxic Substances, http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed September 2024.

⁹ LAUSD. 2020. Historic Resources Inventory. Los Angeles, CA.

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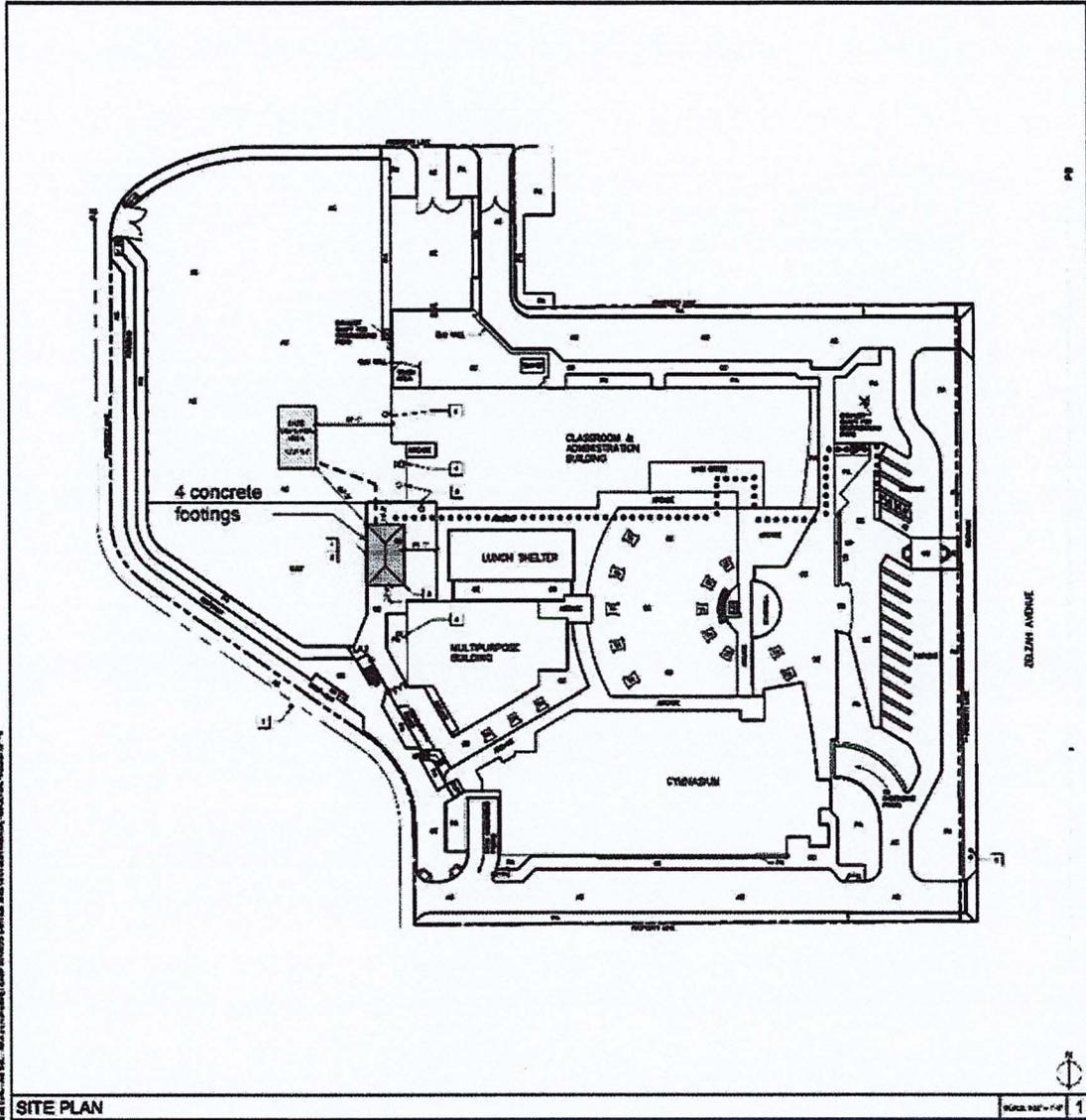


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Exhibit A. Site Plan



SITE PLAN

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