

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

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Deputy Director, Environmental Health and Safety

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

THIS NOTICE WAS POSTED
ON March 07 2025
UNTIL April 07 2025
REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2025 047090

FILED
Mar 07 2025
Dean C. Logan, Registrar – Recorder/County Clerk
Electronically signed by CARLOS CHEN

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:

Weigand Avenue Elementary School Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) Bungalow Removal

Project Location – Specific:

The Weigand Avenue Elementary School Expanded Learning Opportunities Program (ELOP) Bungalow Removal Project (Project) will be located on the approximately 4.4-acre Weigand Avenue Elementary School campus (Weigand Avenue ES or Campus). The Campus is located on 10401 Weigand Avenue in the South Los Angeles area of the City of Los Angeles. It is bound by 103rd Street to the north, Weigand Avenue to the east, 105th Street to the south, and Gorman Avenue to the west. The Campus is located in an urbanized community primarily consisting of commercial uses, multi-family, and single-family residences.

Project Location – City:

Los Angeles

Project Location – County:

Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The ELOP provides funding for afterschool enrichment programs for K-6th grades. The Project will remove an existing bungalow building with two classrooms and the adjacent asphalt to accommodate the creation of an approximately 2,000 square feet outdoor learning environment to serve as a gathering/instructional space. (Exhibit A) The outdoor learning environment includes landscaping with trees, pavers, and decomposed granite; shaded seating areas and shade structure; internet connectivity; irrigation and outdoor sink; and accessibility improvements. The adjacent landscaped area may be included in the outdoor learning environment to adapt to specific site conditions and incorporate existing trees, planting areas, and other greening elements. The total budget for this Project is \$9,323,069.

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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.



The Project will be implemented per all applicable local and State regulations, as well as all District Standards and Specifications, such as those provided in Los Angeles Unified's (LA Unified) Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report for the School Upgrade Program (Subsequent PEIR).¹ The primary purpose of the Project 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 Project 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 Project 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:

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 Project will result in the planting of new trees and shrubs on improved ground surface areas of the existing Campus. The Project will remove one bungalow with two classrooms and adjacent asphalt to accommodate space for outdoor learning environment. While the project involves demolition, it repurposes existing land rather than expanding beyond the current educational use. The additions such as the landscaping, seating, internet connectivity, irrigation, and outdoor sink are minor modifications rather than substantial development. As such, the Project would constitute operation, repair, maintenance, and minor alteration of existing public facilities involving no expansion of the facilities' use.

All proposed Project components would involve minor alterations to the existing Campus and will occur within the area occupied by the existing facility. The Project components will not present a new or

¹ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR)," <https://www.lausd.org/ceqa>, adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

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



expanded use of the Campus. Therefore, the Project constitutes minor alterations to existing school sites that result in no expansion of use and meets the requirements of CEQ A 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 landscaping with trees, pavers, and decomposed granite on the Campus. The installation of an outdoor sink, irrigation, and internet connectivity likely involve minor trenching but do not constitute major construction. Moreover, the Project will adapt to specific site conditions and incorporate existing trees and planting areas which will result in minimal environmental disruption. 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.

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

The Project will occur on an existing campus that is located within an urbanized setting. The surrounding uses of the Campus are residential uses to the north, south, east and west. The site is not designated as a biologically sensitive location. The nearest significant ecological area (SEA) is the El Segundo Dunes which are located approximately 11.5 miles west of the Campus.³ The nearest critical habitat is designated as such for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher and is located approximately 11.6 miles northeast 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.*

³ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed February 2025.

⁴ United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html> accessed February 2025.



There are no known unusual circumstances that would have a significant effect on the environment. The upgrades associated with the Project 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, LA Unified'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.⁵

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. All Project related ground disturbing activities would comply with SC-AQ-1, SC-AQ-2, SC-AQ-3, and SC-AQ-4. As the Project involves 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 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 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 soils.⁷ 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.

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 21.5 miles northwest of the Campus.⁸ 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 LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," available at https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/135/ccqa/2023_Standard_Conditions_UPDATE_Final.pdf.

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

⁸ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed February 2025.



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.⁹ 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.*

The LAUSD Historic Preservation Specialist determined that Weigand Avenue ES is ineligible as a historic resource.¹⁰ 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

⁹ California Department of Toxic Substances Control. DTSC Databases. Available at: <https://dtsc.ca.gov/dtscs-cortese-list/> Accessed February 2025.

¹⁰ LAUSD. 2020. Historic Resources Inventory. Los Angeles, CA, last accessed February 2025.

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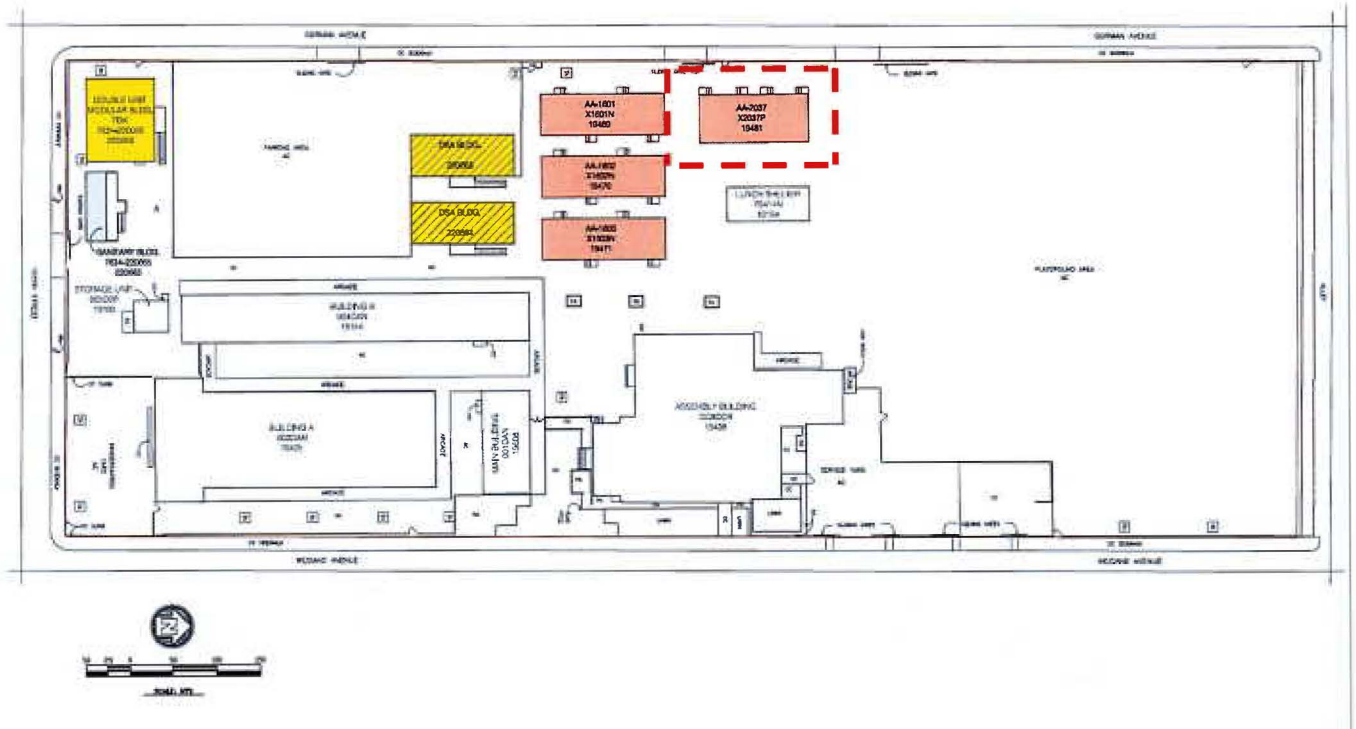


FILED
Mar 07 2025

Dean C. Logan, Registrar - Recorder/County Clerk

Electronically signed by CARINA CHEN

EXHIBIT A – Weigand Avenue Elementary School Site Plan (not to scale)



 PROJECT SITE