

ECO- SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE

Strengthening Greening Initiatives Through Community Partnerships

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Sotomayor Magnet - From soil to structure: Climate literacy through Adobe



Board Resolution

Objectives

On February 11, 2025, the Board of Education unanimously passed a resolution for Strengthening Greening Initiatives through Community Partnerships.

Objectives:

- Strengthen and expand partnerships with non-profit organizations
- Remove internal fees and allocate funding to cover fees that cannot be removed
- Prioritize review of grant-funded greening projects to ensure timely completion
- Implement a comprehensive plan to achieve these goals and strengthen partnerships



Status & Discussion

- Commitment to Partnerships
- Removal of Internal Fees
- Eligibility Criterion
- Review Process
- Progress Reporting
- ESO Staffing



Eagle Rock Elementary School Living Schoolyard

Commitment to Partnerships

Action 1

Strengthening partnerships:

- Monthly standing meetings with the Living Schoolyards Coalition
- Non-profit organizations are now supported by the Establishment of the Eco-Sustainability Office
- Actions described in the Implementation Plan demonstrate commitment to strengthening and expanding greening partnerships



Resolved, That the Governing Board of the Los Angeles Unified School District (Board) recognizes the vital role of non-profit organizations in creating sustainable and equitable learning environments for all students, and commits to strengthening and expanding partnerships within this sector including organizations that have developed relationships with communities that have been historically underserved and negatively impacted by climate change and environmental hazards;

Removal of Internal Fees

Action 2

Removal of Fees:

- LAUSD has approved a budget allocation of \$3 Million over 3 Years to support current third-party greening projects:
 - Cover unpaid fees and reimbursement of paid fees, including OAR and inspection fees
 - Other fees and expenses, including ADA upgrades etc. would require additional funding
 - Funding allocation will consider project construction cost
- Use of bond funds requires BOC & BOE approvals



Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to remove internal fees for non-profit organizations that lead District school greening projects regardless of funding source. Where feasible and legally allowable, up to \$3 million in District resources, including eligible bond funds, will be allocated to cover costs such as: Owner's Authorized Representative fees; project fees; ADA retrofits; District staff time; testing; design reviews; and inspections



Removal of Internal Fees

Summary of Strategies Reviewed

- Identify and categorize various fees and related services
- For essential services and fees such as environmental abatement and permits, identify them early and where allowable incorporate them into grant funding requests
- Determine if LAUSD can offset any costs if not allowable as grant-funded
- Assess internal LAUSD services/fees that impact greening project budgets
- Determine streamlining methods for LAUSD that will result in greater efficiency and cost reduction
- Evaluate applicability of various fees and remove costs where possible
- Determine if any applicable fees can be paid from another source
- Investigate all potential strategies to remove fees including reclassifying fees as in-kind contributions, using fee waivers, and reimbursing costs for fees to non-profit organizations



Removal of Internal Fees

Assessment

Identification and categorization of fees:

GREENING PROJECT FEES	LAUSD	External	Cost Range per Project
Design Review (including TQST review)	X		\$9,000 - \$30,000
FETU Testing	X		\$4,500 - \$20,000
OAR/M&O Support	X		\$30,000
Inspection	X		4% of construction cost
CEQA & Site Assessment Oversight	X		\$1,200 - \$4,075
A&E Services Constr Admin Support	X		\$10,000 - \$27,000
DSA Review		X	based on construction cost
Soil Testing		X	TBD
Soil Compaction Testing		X	TBD
FETU Phase 3 (if applicable)	X		\$15,000 - \$20,000
Payment Bond		X	~3% of construction cost
Insurance		X	TBD
Site Survey and Utility Location		X	\$15,000 - \$25,000



Project Eligibility



Elysian Heights Elementary School Edible Garden

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to develop an implementation plan defining eligibility criterion for non-profit organizations and projects. The plan will describe strategies to remove and/or mitigate fees, such as fee waivers, returning or reimbursing costs for fees that non-profit organizations have already paid, reclassifying internal fees as in-kind contributions, and precluding the upfront payment of fees

Action 3

Implementation Plan eligibility criteria:

Eligibility criteria for non-profit organizations seeking to do projects for LAUSD:

- Organizations with tax-exempt status with the IRS

Eligibility criteria for greening projects eligible for fee mitigation:

- Bringing outside funding for use to implement greening projects
- Increase green permeable features of school sites, including native and drought-tolerant planting, permeable paving, edible gardens, and stormwater management



Review Process



Students viewing 9th Street Elementary School's Climate Action Club beautification project

Resolved further, That for grant-funded partner greening projects, the District will prioritize the review of these projects and ensure that they begin construction on time to meet grant deadlines. In order to accomplish this, the District will utilize an efficient review process for all submittals including a 10-day review time as outlined in department guidelines

Action 4

Prioritize the review of grant-funded greening projects:

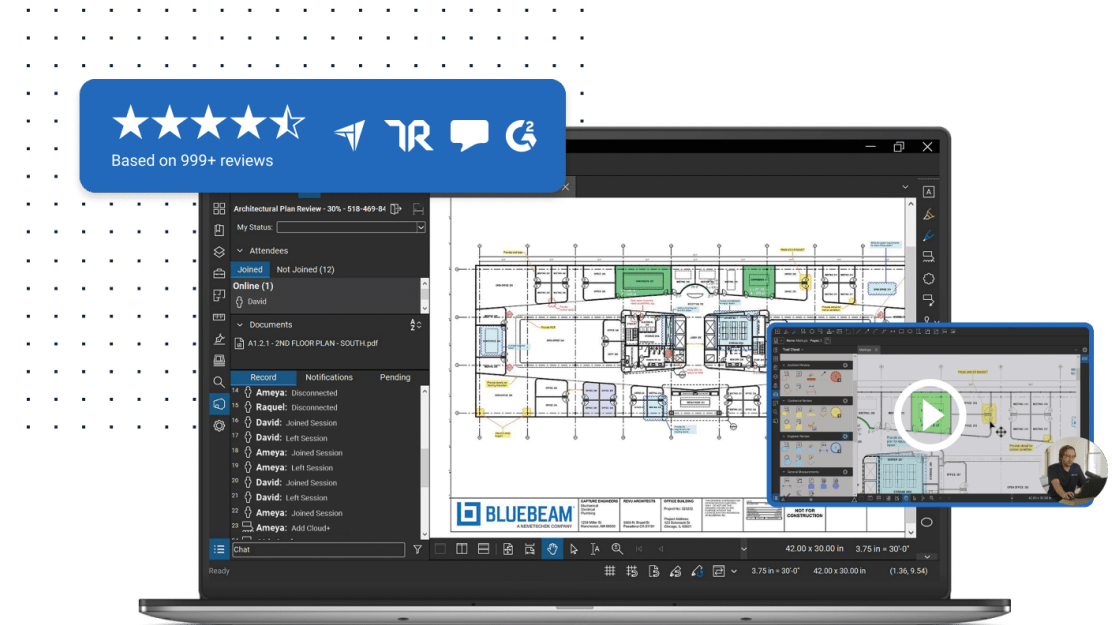
- The design review process is described in LAUSD guidelines and is explained in greater detail in the How-to Guide for LAUSD's Greening Partners
- The design review time-period:
 - 2-day intake period for upload of documents
 - 10-day initial design review
 - 1-week period for revisions by partner
 - 1-week back-check period
 - The revision and back-check periods can vary depending on the complexity of revisions

Review Process

Streamlining

Ways to streamline the review process:

- Ensure that partners have full understanding of submittal requirements prior to submitting for design review
- Provide advanced notice to review team and emphasize importance of 10-day turnaround
- Provide 2-day warning of closing of Bluebeam review to ensure comments are added on time
- Close comments on time with notification provided to partner when review is complete
- Develop strategies to mitigate factors in the project implementation process that might delay the start of construction



Bluebeam Software **SOURCE:** Bluebeam Product demo video

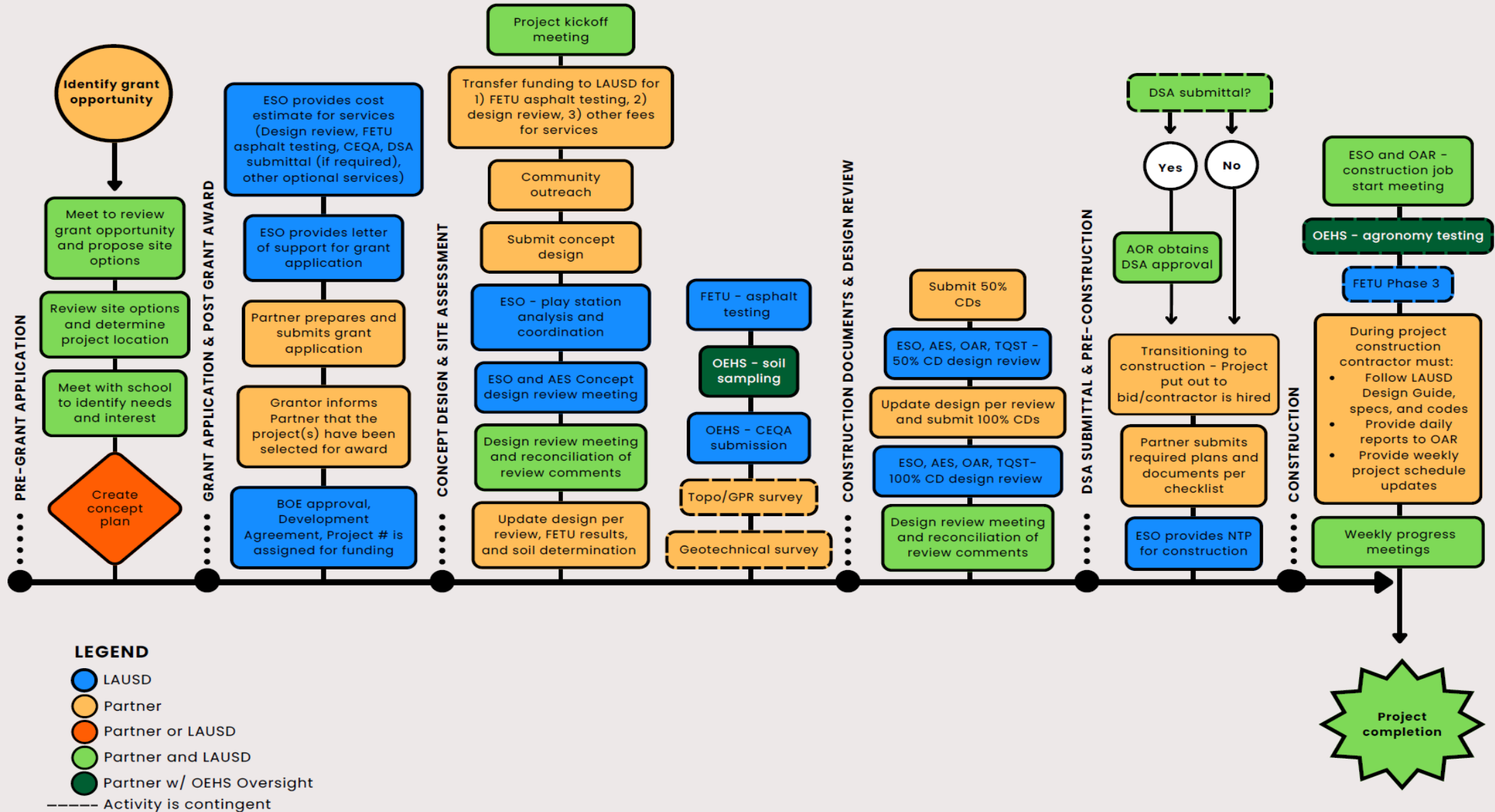
Review Process

Strategies for Timely Start of Construction

- How-to Guide section on transition to construction
- OAR onboarding checklist
- Job start checklist
- Greening Project Process is explained in the How-to Guide for LAUSD's Greening Partners



Greening Project Process





Progress Reporting

Action 5

- 1) "How-to" Guide for LAUSD's Greening Partners
- 2) Recommendations for streamlining project supervision
- 3) Work on Design Guidelines specific to school greening projects
- 4) Development Agreement modifications

Resolved further, That the Board directs the Superintendent to present to the Greening Schools and Climate Resilience Committee a comprehensive plan for fee removal and a progress report on potential funding options to support third-party greening projects, within 60 days. The District will also provide a progress report on (1) the District's "how-to" guide for greening projects requirements; (2) recommendations to streamline project supervision requirements and reduce oversight expenses; (3) development of school greening-specific Design Guidelines; and (4) potential modification to Development Agreements to reduce unnecessary burdens on greening partners; and, be it finally



Norwood Street Elementary School ELOP garden planting day

PROGRESS REPORTING

How-to Guide for LAUSD's Greening Partners

- ESO has addressed comments from recent reviews of the draft guide
- How-to Guide was issued on June 5, 2025
- Topics covered in the How-to Guide:
 - Pre-Grant Application
 - Pre-Grant Award
 - Non-Grant Funded Projects
 - Design and Planning
 - Transitioning to Construction
 - Project-Related Fees



Pacoima Middle School Ribbon Cutting day – "How-to" Guide for Greening Partners

Progress Reporting

Streamlining Project Supervision

Change in approach for review and oversight of third-party greening projects

- ESO staff will provide expedited TQST design review per criteria developed in collaboration with TQST
- ESO will have dedicated Program Manager/OAR staff to provide targeted expertise and streamlined services during construction
- Additional ESO staff hiring will be required to carry out this increased workload

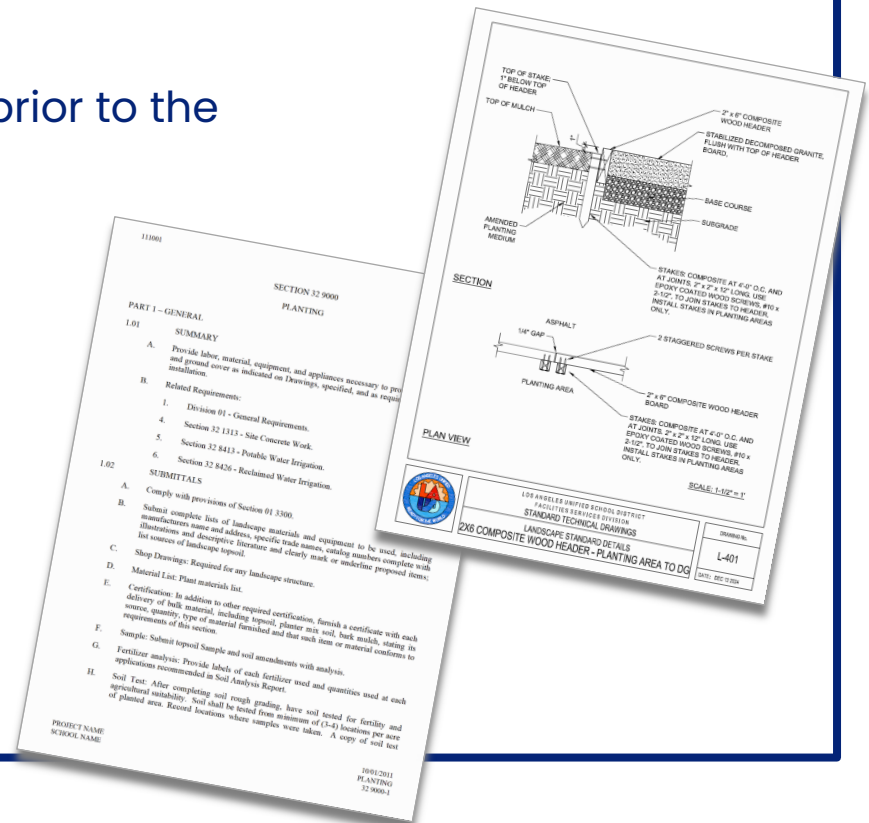


Hamasaki Elementary School landscaping bed is prepared for shrub installation

Progress Reporting

Greening-Specific Design Guidelines

- LAUSD Design Guidelines for Greening Projects
 - Initial draft in development and under review by internal departments
- A pilot wood play structure was approved for Esperanza ES
- Removal of lead-containing paint and coating is not required prior to the demolition of asphalt that has tested negative for asbestos.
- List of details updated
 - L-401 thru L-407 (2x6 and 4x6 headers)
- List of specs updated
 - Section 32 9000 - Planting





Progress Reporting



Development Agreements

- In response to feedback from greening partners, the following modifications have been made to the Development Agreement:
 - The term “Developer” was replaced with the name of the partner organization throughout
 - Projects that are not within 20-feet of a building or structure can be exempt from fire insurance requirement
 - Small-scale projects limited to planting trees and native plants within existing landscape areas will utilize a Beautification License Agreement instead of a Development Agreement
 - Performance Bonds for third-party greening agreements are no longer required. However, if there is no added cost, maintaining the Performance Bond remains the best practice

ESO Staffing

Action 6

- Currently four (4) ESO positions posted at careers.lausd.org:
 - Sustainability Specialist – published date 3/7/2025
 - Energy & Sustainability Program Manager – published date 3/20/2025
 - Energy and Sr. Energy Specialists – published date 4/1/2025
- Outreach to nine regional universities with energy and sustainability related programs to recruit qualified graduates
- Hiring for Sustainability Specialist is underway; hiring for the other positions will proceed following the Sustainability Specialist
- Staff augmentation to support 3rd party project workload is under review



Resolved. That the Board directs the Superintendent to take all necessary steps to hire staff for the Eco-Sustainability Office up to the maximum number of positions allocated in the approved funding allocation. This measure ensures that the office has the necessary resources to effectively fulfill its mission and provide service to our District staff, school communities and greening partners. The Superintendent or designee shall provide biannual reports to the School Greening and Climate Resilience Committee on hiring progress, including any challenges or delays. If full staffing is not achieved, the District must state the reasons and any mitigating actions being taken.



Northridge Middle School campus greening tour



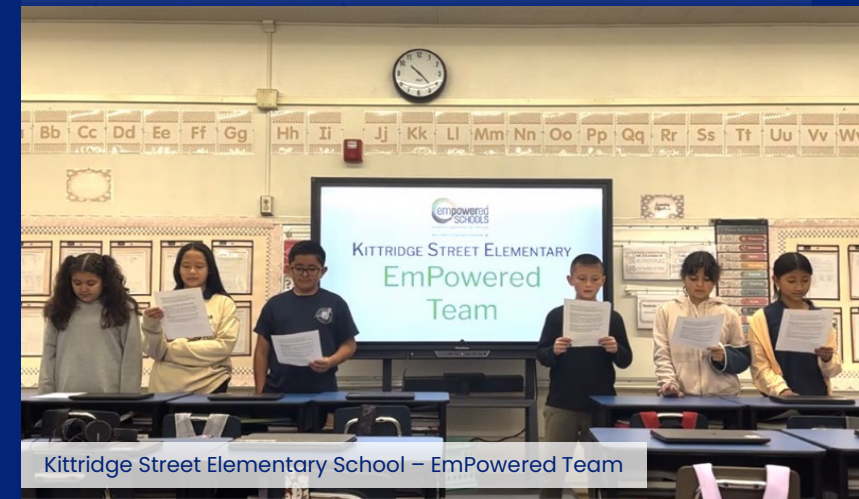
Ms. Aghajanian's class's Earth Month actions showcase



Superior Street Elementary School – HEROES for Zero '24-'25 Team



Alta California Elementary School – Aeroponic Tower Garden Program



Kittridge Street Elementary School – EmPowered Team



Sotomayor Magnet CTE Agriculture Program – Kunekune pigs



Gage Middle School SEEDS Garden planting day



LA Environment & Sanitation tabling at LA Tech Center Earth Day event