

Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health and Safety

AUSTIN BEUTNER
Superintendent of Schools

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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



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:

South Gate Middle School Portable Removal and Maintenance Project

Project Location – Specific:

The Project will be located on the Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD's or District's) South Gate Middle School (South Gate MS) campus, located at 4100 Firestone Blvd, South Gate, CA 90280

Project Location – City:

South Gate

Project Location – County:

Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Project will entail removing eight (8) portable buildings (14 classrooms and 1 portable restroom building) totaling an estimated 13,872 square feet, repair and install HVAC systems, and striping for a new Futsal Soccer Court and new parking stalls.

There would be no increase in capacity, enrollment or intensity of use as a result of the Project. The Project will decrease the number of classroom buildings on campus. South Gate MS maintains one of the District's largest middle school student populations. Opening of the new International Studies Learning Center Middle School at the nearby Legacy High School Complex will allow for a realignment of middle school enrollment in the South Gate area. Further, the District will enact a "Zone of Choice" policy for middle school students in the South Gate area. As such, portable buildings at South Gate MS are no longer necessary.

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

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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.*

Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects as adopted by the Board of Education in February 2019.¹ 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).

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*
- Statutory Exemption:

Reasons why project is exempt:

Section 15301 – Existing Facilities

Section 15301 of the CEQA Guidelines refers to the Class 1 exemption, which 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 types of "existing facilities" itemized in the CEQA Guidelines are not intended to be all-inclusive of the types of projects which might fall within Class 1. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of an existing use.

The Project entails removing eight (8) portable buildings (14 classrooms and 1 portable restroom building), which are considered to be individual small structures. Removal of the portables will decrease the number of classroom buildings on campus. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements for a Class 1 Categorical Exemption.

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 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.³ The Project site

¹ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on February 5, 2019.

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

³ http://maps.assessor.lacounty.gov/GVH_2_2/Index.html?configBase=http://maps.assessor.lacounty.gov/Geocortex/Essentials/REST/sites/PAIS/viewers/PAIS_hv/virtualdirectory/Resources/Config/Default, accessed August 2019.

is located more than seven (7) miles southwest of the nearest sensitive environment, Puente Hills Sensitive Environmental Area in Los Angeles County.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 Project is not expected to result in significant cumulative environmental impacts. While there will likely be routine general maintenance occurring on the Campus, there are currently no known successive projects of the same type or scale planned for the Campus. Therefore, no cumulative impacts will result from the Project and successive projects of the same type occurring 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 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, 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 2019.⁵

There will be minor ground-disturbing activities associated with the removal of the eight (8) portable buildings. Therefore, consideration must be given to the management of disturbed soil associated with earthwork activities for the proposed project. If construction or earthmoving activities require import or export of soils and materials, Office of Environmental Health & Safety (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 applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.⁶ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-9, 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.⁷ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1.⁸ Therefore, the Project would 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;*

⁴ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed August 2019.

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

⁶ http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t, accessed August 2019.

⁷ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on February 5, 2019.

⁸ *Ibid.*

The closest designated state scenic highway is the State Route 2 (SR2), which is located approximately 19 miles northeast of the Campus.⁹ Therefore, the proposed Project would 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;*

The proposed project is not located on a site that is included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.¹⁰ Therefore, the proposed 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.*

LAUSD has identified the South Gate MS campus as historic resources under CEQA, as it has been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and is listed in the California Register of Historic Resources.^{11,12} Portable classrooms buildings are not meant to be permanent structures and therefore are not considered contributing elements to the historic resource. The work involving HVAC components will consist of the removal and replacement of the existing HVAC equipment in the same location and would not otherwise alter the significance of the campus.

Although the Project does not entail components that are expected to significantly alter the Campus, the Contractor and subcontractors shall be made specifically aware (when applicable) that the work will occur within a campus that qualifies as a historic resource. The drawings and specifications shall include (in the demolition section or other general conditions) requirements for the protection of existing elements, buildings, and structures on the campus and a path of travel for workers and materials consistent with SC-CUL-3 of the Standard Conditions.¹³ As such, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.

Prepared By:

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Signed by:



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Date:

8/15/19

⁹ http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/, accessed August 2019.

¹⁰ http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed May 2018.

¹¹ LAUSD. 2014. Historic Resources Survey Report. Available online at: <http://achieve.lausd.net/Page/2799>.

¹² LAUSD. 2002. DPR 523 A, Primary Record for Thomas Jefferson High School. Los Angeles, CA.

¹³ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on February 5, 2019.