

Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health and Safety

AUSTIN BEUTNER
Superintendent of Schools

DIANE PAPPAS
Chief Executive Officer,
District Operations & Digital Innovations

CARLOS A. TORRES
Director (Acting),
Office of Environmental Health and Safety

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

PLACE
“FILED”
STICKER
HERE

PLACE
“POSTED”
STICKER
HERE

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:

LAUSD Proposition 39 Charter School Co-locations (2018-2019)

Project Location – Specific:

The proposed project (Project) will be implemented pursuant to the Los Angeles Unified School District’s (District) legal obligation under state law (referred to as “Proposition 39”) to offer available (i.e., unoccupied) facilities to charter schools who request them on an annual basis. The Project will be implemented on approximately 67 school campuses throughout the District for the 2018-2019 school year. Specific Project sites are listed in Attachment A to this Notice of Exemption (NOE).

Project Location – City:

Various (see attached list)

Project Location – County:

Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Project will consist of minor renovations and improvements necessary for charter schools to operate autonomously in unoccupied spaces on existing District campuses. These “co-location” improvements will consist of the provision of new furniture, information technology (IT) improvements (public address, telephone, intrusion alarm, and data cabling), new computer equipment, security upgrades, fencing and other minor improvements required to establish the charter school operations. No new building additions or permanent alterations of existing buildings are included as part of the Project. The Project will also include minor improvements necessary to provide dedicated, gated pedestrian access and/or “drop-off” zones at the school sites for charter school students. In some cases, restrooms and walkways will be modified to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The Project also includes minor cosmetic repairs at charter school co-location sites that will be vacated after the 2017-18 school year. Attachment A categorizes the scope of work for each co-location site as one the following: no change (S=Same); growth from the previous year (G=Growth); reconfiguration or reduction from the previous year (R=Reconfiguration); or a vacated site (V=Vacated).

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 LAUSD’s Program Environmental Impact Report for the School Upgrade

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.

PLACE
"FILED"
STICKER
HERE

Program.¹ The Project will be constructed per Division of State Architect approved plans. The Project would 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 are the staff and students at the charter 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*
- 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 consists of the provision of new furniture, IT improvements (public address, telephone, intrusion alarm, and data cabling), new computer equipment, security improvements, fencing and other minor measures required to establish charter school operations at the various campuses listed in Attachment A. No new building additions or permanent alterations of existing buildings are included as part of the Project. These modernizations will entail minor modifications to structures consisting of wiring and installing equipment to support the IT improvements and to ensure security. Some projects will also include minor improvements necessary to provide dedicated, gated pedestrian access and/or a "drop-off" zone at the school site for charter school students. In some cases, restrooms and walkways will require minor modifications to comply with the ADA. The Project will not cause an increase in the schools' capacity. Therefore, the Project constitutes minor exterior alterations to existing school sites that result in no expansion of use and is categorically exempt under Section 15301(a)(f) of the CEQA Guidelines.

Section 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction

Class 2 consists of the replacement or reconstruction of 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.

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

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

PLACE
"FILED"
STICKER
HERE

The Project includes the upgrades and replacements of existing facilities including minor renovations to improve security such as dedicated/gated pedestrian access, and/or "drop-off" zones at school sites for charter students, modified fencing, reconstructions of the walkways and restrooms to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and cosmetic repairs at charter school co-location sites that will be vacated after the 2017-2018 school year. No new building additions or permanent alterations of existing buildings are included as part of this Project. The designed project will not involve an increase in capacity of the schools and is therefore categorically exempt under Section 15302(a).

Section 15303 - New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structure; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure.

The Project activities include construction and renovating of fences, restroom and walkway modifications to comply with ADA requirements including curbs and ramps, wiring and equipment installation for IT improvements, gated pedestrian access, drop-off zones for charter students, and cosmetic repairs at charter school co-location sites that will be vacated after the 2017-2018 school year. The conversion of small structures from this Project will not include new buildings or permanent alterations of the existing buildings are included by this Project. Therefore, the Project qualifies for the CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

Section 15311 - Accessory Structures

Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including, but are not limited to, on premise signs and small parking lots.

The Project includes the replacement of minor structures that would be considered accessories to the existing facilities, including the installation of restroom and walkway ADA facilities, fences, wiring and equipment installation for IT improvements, gated pedestrian access, and drop-off zones, and cosmetic repairs at charter school co-location sites that will be vacated after the 2017-2018 school year. The accessory structures are minor and no new buildings or permanent alterations of the existing buildings are included by this Project. Therefore, the Project qualifies for the CEQA Guidelines Section 15311.

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 sites are fully developed Campuses within urbanized communities.³ None of the Project sites have been designated as biologically sensitive locations. 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;*

³ City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, <http://zimas.lacity.org/>, accessed May 2018.

PLACE
“FILED”
STICKER
HERE

The Project will not be expected to result in significant cumulative environmental impacts. As active school campuses, it is anticipated that projects such as routine maintenance activities or upgrades will occur on the campuses in the future. However, there are currently no known successive projects of the same type or scale planned for the campuses. As required by Proposition 39, LAUSD goes through a process of offering charter co-location facilities on an annual basis. This process results in the need to implement very minor physical improvements to existing school campuses, which taken together over time do not have the potential to result in an impact that is cumulatively considerable. Therefore, no cumulative impacts will occur as a result of the Project.

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 will have a significant effect on the environment; however co-location of charter schools on existing school campuses may require the accommodation of passenger loading and drop-off for the vehicles providing transportation for charter school students. LAUSD's Office of Environmental Health and Safety (OEHS) recommends that: 1) the existing neighborhood and charter schools stagger their respective start and end times to diffuse traffic during pick-up/drop-off; and/or 2) that the charter schools utilize separate loading zones for pick-up/drop-off. OEHS also recommends that the charter school implement its own dedicated Safety Valet Program during morning drop-off to facilitate the unloading of students in an efficient and safe manner and provide clear guidance for vehicle queuing and direction and procedures for unloading. This Program should be executed pursuant to OEHS Reference Guide: "Implementing a Safety Valet Program at Schools (Ref-5496.1)." This Guide is available at <http://lausd-oehs.org/docs/ReferenceGuides/REF-5496.1.pdf>.

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, then LAUSD's 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. Compliance with District specifications would ensure that there is not a reasonable possibility that the project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Project is not anticipated to require ground disturbance associated with grading, infrastructure upgrades, landscaping, hardscaping, and foundation installation. These activities are not considered unusual circumstances for the classes of projects under which an exemption is claimed. However, if construction or earthmoving activities require import or export of soils and materials, the 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 other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements.⁴ Furthermore, as set forth in standard conditions of approval SC-CUL-13, SC-CUL-15, SC-CUL-18, and SC-CUL-19 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.⁵ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent

⁴ http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

⁵ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>. Adopted by the Board of Education on November 10, 2015.



feasible per standard condition of approval SC-USS-1 of the Program EIR.⁶ 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 scenic highway;*

There are no officially designated state scenic highways within the vicinity of any of the Project locations.⁷ In addition, the Project would not result in the removal of historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or other scenic resources. Therefore, the 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; or*

The Project will be located on sites that are currently operating schools that have been deemed safe for occupancy. 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 Project entails minor, reversible modifications to structures, including wiring and installing equipment to support IT improvements and to ensure security. No new building additions or permanent alterations of existing buildings are included as part of the Project. Therefore the Project does not have the potential to adversely impact historical resources.

Prepared By:
Edward Paek, AICP
CEQA Project Manager/Contract Professional

Phone and Email:
(213) 241-4676
edward.paek@lausd.net

Signed by:

Date:

Carlos A. Torres,
Director (Acting), Office of Environmental Health and Safety

⁶ *Ibid.*
⁷ California Department of Transportation. California Scenic Highway Mapping System. Available at: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16_livability/scenic_highways/index.htm. Accessed May 2017.