

# 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 May 24 2024  
UNTIL June 24 2024  
REGISTRAR - RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2024 113072  
FILED  
May 24 2024  
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Electronically signed by SAVANNAH ROOP/RL

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

**From:** LAUSD OEHS  
333 S. Beaudry Avenue  
21<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90017

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**Project Title:**

Outdoor Learning Environments Project at Five (5) LA Unified Campuses

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**Project Location – Specific:**

1. Bridge Street Elementary School, 605 North Boyle Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90033
2. Cimarron Avenue Elementary School, 11559 Cimarron Avenue, Hawthorne, CA 90250
3. Fair Avenue Elementary School, 6501 Fair Avenue, North Hollywood, CA 91606
4. Grape Street Elementary School, 1940 East 111th Street, Los Angeles, CA 90059
5. Rowan Avenue Elementary School, 600 South Rowan Ave, Los Angeles, CA 90023

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**Project Location – City:**

Various

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**Project Location – County:**

Los Angeles

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**Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The intent of the proposed Outdoor Learning Environment (OLE) Project is to provide safe, welcoming, and sustainable outdoor learning environments at schools most in need of greening resources to support instruction. The principal project planning tenets are to: accommodate general classroom use for cross-disciplinary lessons; increase greening on the campus; develop informal gathering spaces and/or play spaces; provide overflow seating for nearby library/multipurpose rooms; provide space for outdoor performances/speakers; provide outdoor study areas adjacent to classrooms; and utilize planted areas to augment class curriculum.

The Project will be individually designed on each of the five elementary school locations (Campus or Campuses) listed above and consists of the removal of one two-classroom relocatable bungalow building to accommodate the creation of an approximately 2,000-square-foot outdoor learning environment that

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333 South Beaudry Avenue, 21<sup>st</sup> 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.*



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consists of new landscaping, including trees, pavers, decomposed granite, shaded seating areas; internet connectivity; shade structure; and irrigation and outdoor sink. Site plans for each of the Campuses are included as Attachment: Exhibit A – Site Plans. The Project will also include minor improvements to ensure compliance with local, state, and federal requirements including from the ADA.

The Board of Education approved on October 17, 2023, a budget for the proposed Project of \$13,779,371. 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 LA Unified's Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report for the School Upgrade Program (Subsequent PEIR).<sup>1</sup> 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 each Campus pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130 - 38139).

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**Name of Public Agency Approving the Project:**

Los Angeles Unified School District

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**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:**

Los Angeles Unified School District

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**Exempt Status: (check one below)**

- ☐ Ministerial [Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21080(b)(1); CEQA Guidelines Section 15268<sup>2</sup>]:
- ☐ 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.

The Project will be individually designed on each of the five elementary school locations (Campus or Campuses) listed above and consists of the removal of one two-classroom relocatable bungalow building to accommodate the creation of an approximately 2,000-square-foot outdoor learning environment that consists of new landscaping, including trees, pavers, decomposed granite, shaded seating areas; internet connectivity; shade structure; and irrigation and outdoor sink. All proposed Project components will

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<sup>1</sup>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

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



involve minor alterations and will occur within areas occupied by existing facilities at the Project sites. The Project components will not present a new or expanded use of the Project sites. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA 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 the planting of new trees and shrubs on improved ground surface areas of existing Campuses. The removal of trees is not anticipated as part of the proposed scope of work. 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 the Project 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 in fully developed Campuses within urbanized communities.<sup>3</sup> None of the Project sites have been designated as biologically sensitive locations. The nearest threatened or endangered species are the Coastal California Gnatcatcher and Southwestern Willow Flycatcher located approximately 4.8 miles east of Rowan Avenue Elementary School and 4.8 miles north of Fair Avenue Elementary School respectively. The nearest sensitive environment to the Project site is the Verdugo Mountains Significant Ecological Area located approximately 2.4 miles northwest of Fair Elementary School.<sup>4,5</sup> As such, the Project will not affect 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 Campuses are active school sites and there will likely be ongoing maintenance activities and minor Project to keep them operational. There are currently no known successive projects of the same type or scale planned for each 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.*

<sup>3</sup> Southern California Association of Governments, 2019 Annual Land Use, [https://hub.scag.ca.gov/datasets/ea9fda878c1947d2afac5142fd5cb658\\_0/explore/](https://hub.scag.ca.gov/datasets/ea9fda878c1947d2afac5142fd5cb658_0/explore/), accessed April 2024.

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

<sup>5</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, [http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3\\_Public/Viewer.html](http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html), accessed April 2024.





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.<sup>6</sup>

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 of the Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects. 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. If justified by the determination memorandum, excavated soils would 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.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-9, SC-CUL-10, and SC-CUL-11 of the Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects, 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.<sup>8</sup> Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1.<sup>9</sup> 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 is the Angeles Crest Scenic Byway, which is located approximately 12 miles north of Bridge Street Elementary School.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, the proposed

<sup>6</sup> 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/ceqa/2023\\_Standard\\_Conditions\\_UPDATE\\_Final.pdf](https://www.lausd.org/cms/lib/CA01000043/Centricity/domain/135/ceqa/2023_Standard_Conditions_UPDATE_Final.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", [http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file\\_id=219798234&show\\_all\\_versions\\_p=t](http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t)

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, [https://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3\\_Public/Viewer.html](https://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html), accessed April 2024.

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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*

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.<sup>11</sup> 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.*

Of the five campuses, three have been identified as eligible historic resources. Rowan Avenue ES is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and the California Register of Historic Resources. Bridge Street ES and Fair Avenue ES are eligible for the California Register of Historic Resources.

The Project was reviewed by LA Unified's Historic Preservation Specialist and Coordinator to ensure compliance with applicable guidelines (the Secretary's Standards and Los Angeles Unified School District Design Guidelines and Treatment Approaches for Historic Schools (LAUSD Design Guidelines)). This review found that the Project components entail minor modifications limited to spaces that are not considered character-defining and comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

As the Project meets the requirements specified in CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(b)(3), it will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Prepared By:

Bryan Ramos Fernandez, AICP  
CEQA Project Manager/Contract Professional

Phone and Email:

(213) 241-4210  
cp-bryan.fernandez@LAUSD.net

Signed by:

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

Date:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
5/15/2024

Attachment: Exhibit A – Site Plans

<sup>11</sup> California Department of Toxic Substances Control. DTSC Databases. Available at: <https://dtsc.ca.gov/dtscs-cortesc-list/> Accessed January 2024



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## EXHIBIT A – BRIDGE STREET ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)





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## EXHIBIT A – CIMMARRON AVENUE ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)

-  Existing Portables/ Bungalows
-  Existing Portables/ Bungalows to be removed
-  Existing Compliant ADA Path of Travel (POT)
-  Proposed New/ Upgraded ADA Path of Travel (POT)
-  Existing Parking Area
-  Existing ADA ramps
-  Proposed New ADA ramp -N/A
-  Existing Elevator - N/A
-  Existing Drinking Fountain
-  Existing Gate
-  Existing Office, Restrooms
-  Proposed Zone - Outdoor Learning Environment
-  Proposed Outdoor Learning Area





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## EXHIBIT A – FAIR AVENUE ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)





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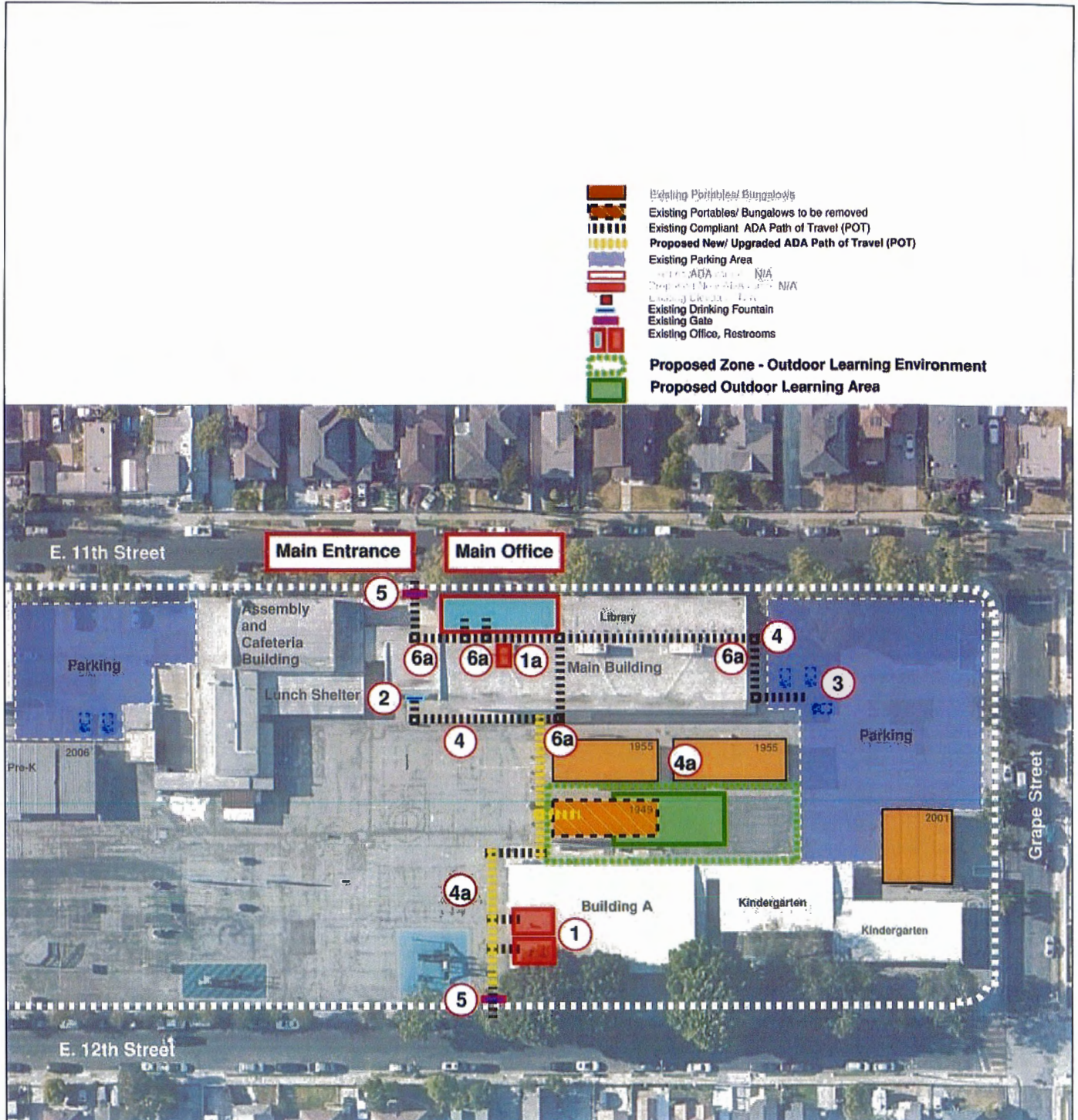


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## EXHIBIT A – GRAPE STREET ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)





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## EXHIBIT A – ROWAN AVENUE ES SITE PLAN (not to scale)

