Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health and Safety

AUSTIN BEUTNER
Superintendent of Schools

CARLOS A. TORRES
Director, Environmental Health and Safety

JENNIFER FLORES
Deputy Director, Environmental Health and Safety

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

ORIGINAL FILED

MAY 24 2021

LOS ANGELES, COUNTY CLERK

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

From: LAUSD OEHS
333 South Beaudry Avenue
21st Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Project Title:
Castellanos Elementary School Urban Greening Project

Project Location – Specific:
The Castellanos Elementary School Urban Greening Project (Project) will be located on the 2.5-acre Castellanos Elementary School (ES) campus. Castellanos ES is located at 1723 Cordova St., Los Angeles, California 90007.

Project Location – City:
Los Angeles

Project Location – County:
Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:
The Project will entail the removal of over 1,500 square feet of asphalt and planting 23 LAUSD approved trees as well as various climate tolerant native shrubs. The remaining existing asphalt surfaces will be painted with high albedo paint to not only beautify the Campus but also reflect the heat hitting the site rather than absorb it. The existing running track will be upgraded and painted with solar reflect paint to help cool the Campus. A stormwater infiltration area will be installed adjacent to the existing grass field to manage stormwater on-site and clean it before sending it out to the stormdrain. The Project will also add a small informal outdoor classroom with natural materials such as boulder and tree stump seating. No increases in student enrollment, capacity, or intensity of use are proposed as part of this Project.

The Project will be implemented pursuant to all District Standards and Specifications,[1] as well as all applicable State, federal, and local regulations. The beneficiaries of the Project include Castellanos ES students, faculty, staff, families, school supporters, the City, and the community at large who may request access to the Campus pursuant to the Civic Center Act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130 - 38139).

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

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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 15268[2]]:
- ☐ 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 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction*
  - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 – Minor Alterations to Land*
- ☐ Statutory Exemption:

Reasons why the 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 removing over 1,500 square feet of asphalt and planting 23 LAUSD approved trees as well as various climate tolerant native shrubs. The remaining existing asphalt surfaces will be painted with high albedo paint to not only beautify the Campus but also reflect the heat hitting the site rather than absorb it. The existing running track will be upgraded with a permeable surface that will support stormwater management on-site. A stormwater infiltration area will be installed adjacent to the existing grass field to manage stormwater on-site and clean it before sending it out to the stormdrain. These improvements constitute minor alterations to existing public facilities. The Project will not result in the physical expansion of school facilities and will not increase the intensity of use, nor will it increase student or staff capacity. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

Section 15302 - Replacement or Reconstruction

Class 2 consists of replacing or reconstructing 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.

As previously noted, the proposed urban greening and stormwater management improvements will not result in an increase or alteration of the current use, function, or capacity of the existing playground area or Campus. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15302.

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

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Section 15344 – Minor Alternations 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 not result in the removal of any trees, but rather includes the planting of 23 LAUSD approved trees as well as various climate tolerant native shrubs. Installation of a permeable track surface and a stormwater infiltration area will reduce and improve the quality of stormwater runoff. 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 it will not violate any of the exceptions, as described in the following section.

1. *The project will occur in certain specified sensitive environments or locations;*

   The Project will occur on an existing Campus that is located within an urban setting[3]. The surrounding uses are primarily commercial. The Campus 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. The nearest significant ecological area (SEA) is Griffith Park which is located approximately 5.6 miles north of the Campus.[4] The nearest critical habitat is designated as such for the California Gnatcatcher and is located approximately 11 miles east of the site.[5] As such, the Project will not impact sensitive environments or locations.

2. *Cumulative impacts will be considerable because successive projects of the same type will occur at the same place over time;*

   The Project will not be expected to result in significant cumulative environmental impacts. As an active school Campus, it is anticipated that projects such as maintenance activities or upgrades will occur on the Campus in the future. However, there are currently no known successive projects of the same type or scale planned for the Campus. As it stands, the Project will not result in potentially significant impacts. 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 will 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 Project does not constitute an expansion of use. There will be minor ground-disturbing activities associated with the Project. The Office of Environmental Health & Safety (OEHS) will be notified to provide oversight to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the requirements of District Specification 01 4524,[6] relevant provisions of South Coast Air Quality Management District Rule 1466, and other applicable environmental agency rules and requirements. Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-9, SC-CUL-10, and SC-CUL-11 and in District protocols, construction activities must be stopped immediately and OEHS notified upon

[3] City of Los Angeles. ZIMAS. Available at: http://zimas.lacity.org/. Accessed April 2018.
[4] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed April 2021.
[5] United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html accessed March 2021.
[6] http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

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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 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 scenic highway;*

The Project site is located approximately 14.1 miles southwest of State Route 2 (SR 2), the nearest officially designated State scenic highway.[9] The Project will not be visible from SR 2. Therefore, the Project will not result in damage to scenic resources or similar resources within a highway that is officially designated as a 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 occur on an existing campus which is not included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.[10] Therefore, the Project will not have an impact 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.*

Castellanos ES opened in 2010 and as such, does not meet the 45-year age criterion for consideration as a historic resource. Therefore, the Project does not have the potential to cause a substantial adverse change to a historic resource.

Prepared By:

Eimon Smith
CEQA Project Manager

Signed by:

Digitally signed by Carlos A. Torres
Date: 2021.05.03 10:09:36 -07'00'

Carlos Torres
CEQA Officer of the Los Angeles Unified School District

Phone and Email:

(213) 241-3417
cp-eimon.smith@LAUSD.net

Date:

[7] *Ibid.*
[8] *Ibid.*
[9] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed April 2021.
[10] California Department of Toxic Substances Control. DTSC Databases. Available at: http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/database/. Accessed April 2021.

Dean C. Logan
Los Angeles County Registrar / Recorder
12400 Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA
(800)201-8999

BUSINESS FILINGS REGISTRATION

NORWALK DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTER

Cashier: A. ONTIVEROS

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Monday, May 24, 2021 10:51 AM

Item(s)

Fee	Qty	Total
NoE - County Posting Fee 2021117120	1	$75.00

Total **$75.00**

Total Documents: 1

Customer payment(s):

Check $75.00

Check List:
#55017 $75.00