

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 November 08 2024
UNTIL December 09 2024
REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2024 231593

FILED
Nov 08 2024
Dean C. Logan, Registrar – Recorder/County Clerk
Electronically signed by TINA TRAN

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

From:
LA UNIFIED OEHS
333 S. Beaudry Avenue
21st Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Project Title:

Wilmington Middle School Wellness Center Project

Project Location – Specific:

The Wilmington Middle School Wellness Center Project (Project) will be located on the approximately 15.5-acre Wilmington Middle School campus (Wilmington MS or Campus). The Campus is located at 1700 Gulf Avenue in the City of Los Angeles. It is bound by East Lomita Boulevard to the north, Bay View Avenue to the east, West R Street to the south, and Gulf Avenue to the west. The Project will occur on the northeastern portion of Campus in the existing field area. The Campus is located in an urbanized community primarily consisting of commercial uses, multi-family, and single-family residences.

Project Location – City:

Los Angeles

Project Location – County:

Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The Project will construct a new wellness center building that is approximately 6,000 square feet (SF) and related site improvements, including a new parking lot, fencing, gates, landscape, hardscape, and infrastructure upgrades. The Project will also include the replacement of the existing natural grass field, decomposed granite running track, and playground activities impacted by the new wellness center development (Figure 1). The Project will accommodate the existing wellness center currently in operation on Campus in the new wellness center building. The Los Angeles Unified School

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.



District Board of Education approved the Wilmington MS Wellness Center Project's budget of \$21,300,000 on November 14, 2023.

The Project will be implemented pursuant to all applicable State, federal, and local regulations, and all applicable Los Angeles Unified School District (LA Unified or District) 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 Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects (SCs) as adopted by the Board of Education in December 2023.¹ LA Unified's SCs, design guidelines, and best management practices are designed to be incorporated into the Project design in order to avoid or limit potential adverse impacts associated with the District's projects.

The beneficiaries of this Project are the Wilmington MS students, faculty, staff, families, school supporters, and the community at large who may access comprehensive medical, dental, and mental health services operated by the healthcare provider.

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*
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 – New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures*
 - *CEQA Guidelines Section 153014 – Minor Additions to Schools*
- ☐ Statutory Exemption:

Reasons why project is exempt:

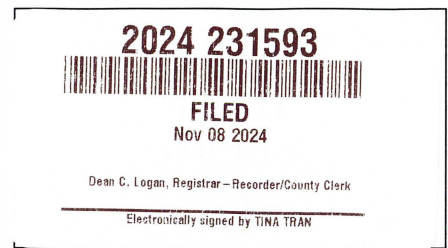
Section 15301 Existing Facilities

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 include the construction of a new wellness center and site improvements such as a parking lot; fencing; gates; landscape; hardscape; and infrastructure improvements. Also included is the replacement of the existing natural grass field, decomposed granite running track, and playground activities impacted by the new wellness center development. The Project will not require or result in the growth of enrollment or capacity of the student population or campus. While the Project is designed to support healthcare services, the Project is not designed to increase student

¹ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

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



enrollment. The Project will be constructed completely within the boundaries of the existing campus and will not require or result in the expansion of use beyond the Campus. The Project will be constructed in an underutilized area on the existing campus. The remaining campus will not be adversely impacted or altered as a result of the Project. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15301.

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 structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made to the structure.

As previously noted, the Project entails constructing one new 6,000 SF building and associated site improvements. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

Section 15314 – Minor Additions to Schools

Class 14 consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption.

The Project entails construction of a new small building and improvements to a portion of an existing campus. The Project will accommodate the existing wellness center currently located on Campus in the new wellness center building. The Project is not designed to increase the student enrollment or capacity and does not include the addition of any new classrooms. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15314.

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 project would occur in certain specified sensitive environments or locations;*

The Project site is a fully developed campus within an urbanized community.³ The Project site is not designated as a biologically sensitive site or location and does not contain sensitive resources or habitat that will be impacted by the Project. The Project will be contained exclusively within the boundaries of the Campus. The nearest Significant Ecological Area is the Harbor Lake Regional Park located approximately 0.75 miles southwest of Wilmington MS.^{4,5} 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 Campus is an active school site and there will likely be ongoing maintenance activities and minor projects on the Campus to keep the schools operational. As the Project will not result in any lasting adverse impacts once construction of the Project is complete, the Project would not contribute to cumulative impacts when considered with expected successive projects.

³ City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, <http://zimas.lacity.org/>, accessed January 2024.

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

⁵ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed January 2024.



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 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 of Approval (SC) SC-BIO-3 of the Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report (SPEIR).^{6,7}

The Project may include minor ground-disturbing activities. These activities are not considered unusual circumstances for the classes of projects under which an exemption is claimed. Nevertheless, consideration must be given to the management of pavement removal and excavated soils associated with earthwork activities for the Project. As the Project involves the removal of pavement, soil sampling and testing for characterization is required prior to demolition and removal of the paving materials. 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.⁸ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-6, SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-9, SC-CUL-10, and SC-GEO-2 of the SPEIR, 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.⁹ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1 of the SPEIR.¹⁰ 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 to the Project site is State Route 27 (SR 27), which is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Wilmington MS.¹¹ The Project will not be visible from SR 27. 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*

⁶ LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023

⁷ LAUSD OEHS, "Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure", <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>.

⁸ LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

⁹ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report," <http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed January 2024.



The Project is not located on a site included on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.¹² 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 historical resource.*

Wilmington MS is over 45 years old, meeting LA Unified's threshold for review as a potential historic resource and requiring evaluation for historic eligibility. LA Unified's Historic Preservation Specialist has identified Wilmington MS as not eligible for federal, State, or local listing under any of the applicable criteria and is therefore not considered a historical resource pursuant to CEQA. Therefore, the Project will not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

Prepared By:

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Signed by:



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

Date:



10/17/24

¹² http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed January 2024.

Figure 1 Site Plan

SITE PLAN

OVERALL SITE PLAN

