

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 04 2024

UNTIL December 04 2024

REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2024 227346



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Nov 04 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:

Chatsworth EEC – New Site

Project Location – Specific:

The Chatsworth Early Education Center New Site Project (Project) will be located on the approximately 40-acre Chatsworth Charter High School Campus (Campus). The Campus is located on 10117 Lurline Avenue in the City of Los Angeles. It is bound by Lemarsh Street to the north, Lurline Avenue to the east, Vintage Street to the south, and De Soto Avenue to the west. The Project will occur on the northeastern portion of the Campus. 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 proposed Project will demolish two deteriorated relocatable classroom bungalows (AA-2627 & AA-2677) and replace them with 2 new permanent modular buildings to be used for a new Early Education Center (EEC). The proposed Project will also replace approximately 15,000 square feet of site asphalt paving with new landscaping. The new EEC will be secured with fencing and accessible via the existing driveway along Lurline Avenue and have direct pedestrian access from the sidewalk (Exhibit A). The Board of Education (BOE) approved the Project's budget of \$5,163,799 on October 5, 2023.

As detailed in the Board of Education (BOE) report, the communities served by the Campus have a high need for licensed infant, toddler, and preschool early education programs. The 91311, 91304, 91306, and 91324 zip codes in the neighborhoods of Chatsworth, Canoga Park, Winnetka, and Northridge all lack available preschool spaces for subsidized

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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.*



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care programs. Each of these zip codes have up to 1,650 kids ages 2-5 who would be income eligible for a state subsidized program. The proposed Project will provide a new EEC in support of the Early Childhood Education Development (ECED) plan to provide licensed preschool spaces that are needed in the Chatsworth community. The proposed Project will have capacity for approximately 18 infant and 36 toddler students, plus associated staff.

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 (SC) as adopted by the Board of Education on December 2023.¹ LAUSD'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 students, faculty, staff, families, school supporters, and the community at large who may request access to the facilities and grounds of the Campus pursuant to the Civic Center act (CA Ed. Code Sections 38130-38139).²

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 15268³]:
- ☐ 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 15303 – New Construction
 - CEQA Guidelines Section 15304 – Minor Alterations
 - CEQA Guidelines Section 15311 – Accessory Structures
 - CEQA Guidelines Section 15314 – 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.

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

² Los Angeles Unified School District, October 17, 2023, Board of Education Report (File #: Rep-008-23/24), Define and Approve the New Chatsworth Early Education Center Project and Amend the Facilities Services Division Strategic Execution Plan to Incorporate Therein.

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

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The proposed Project will demolish two deteriorated classroom bungalows that were previously used by Chatsworth Charter High School and replace them with 2 new modular buildings to be used for a new EEC. The Project will not generate growth or require the addition or construction of new or expanded facilities. Therefore, the Project fulfills 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.

The proposed Project will demolish two deteriorated classroom bungalows that were previously used by Chatsworth Charter High School and replace them with 2 new modular buildings to be used for a new EEC. The Project will not result in an increase or alteration of the current use, function, or capacity of the existing Campus. Therefore, the Project fulfills the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15302.

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.

The proposed Project will demolish two deteriorated classroom bungalows and replace them with 2 new modular buildings. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15303.

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 removal of health, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes.

The proposed Project will replace approximately 15,000 square feet of site asphalt paving with new landscaping. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15304.

Section 15311 – Accessory Structures

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

The proposed Project will demolish and replace two deteriorated classroom bungalows, which are accessory structures within the Campus. These components of the Project qualify as the construction or replacement of minor structures accessory to existing school facilities. These structures are minor accessories to the existing Campus. Therefore, the Project satisfies the requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15311.

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 proposed project will demolish two deteriorated classroom bungalows (AA-2627 & AA-2677) and replace them with 2 new modular buildings. The Project will not increase original student capacity by more than 25% or add ten classrooms to the Campus. 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 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 site is a fully developed Campus within an urbanized area of Los Angeles in the neighborhood of Chatsworth surrounded by residential communities on all sides. The site is not designated as a biologically sensitive location. The nearest significant ecological area (SEA) is the Santa Susana Mountains/Simi Hills SEA located approximately 1.7 miles west of the Project site.⁴ The nearest critical habitat is the Coastal California gnatcatcher habitat located approximately 1.5 miles north of the Project site.^{5,6} As such, the Project will not impact sensitive environments or locations.

2. *Cumulative impacts will 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 school operational. There are currently no known successive projects of the same type or scale planned for the 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 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 include removal of trees. 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. All tree trimming and removal conducted on District property is required to adhere to the procedures described in the LAUSD OEHS Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure.⁷ Additionally, written approval from the school principal will be required before any

⁴ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed October 2024.

⁵ United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html>, accessed October 2024.

⁶ Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed October 2024.

⁷ LAUSD OEHS, "Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure," <https://www.lausd.org/ceqa>



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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-3.⁸

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. 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.⁹ Furthermore, as set forth in SC-CUL-6, SC-CUL-7, SC-CUL-10, and SC-GEO-2, 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.¹⁰ Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1.¹¹ 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 the Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway, a 0.5-mile portion of State Route 27 (SR-27), which is located approximately 1 mile west of the Campus.¹² The Project will not result in the removal of historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or other scenic resources. Therefore, the 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*

The Project site is not located on any sites that are included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.¹³ Therefore, the Project will have no impacts related to being located on a hazardous waste site.

⁸ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report," <https://www.lausd.org/CEQA>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

⁹ LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t

¹⁰ LAUSD OEHS, "School Upgrade Program Final Subsequent Environmental Impact Report," <https://www.lausd.org/CEQA>, Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed December 2023.

¹³ California Department of Toxic Substances, http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed December 2023.



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6. *The project may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource.*

Chatsworth HS 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 has identified Chatsworth HS as eligible for listing as a historic resource per Section 18955 of the California State Historical Building Code (CHBC).¹⁴ The scope of the Project is focused on removal and replacement of two portable buildings and associated landscape features that are not character-defining. The Project will not alter or affect the historic resources on the campus. Therefore, OEHS' Historic Preservation Specialist has determined that the Project will not materially impair the significance of the historic resource and therefore will not cause a substantial adverse historic impact.

Should the scope of the Project activities be altered from the components that are described above, standard District procedure requires that OEHS must be notified immediately to ensure that these activities are conducted in compliance with the Secretary's Standards and would 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:

10/23/24

Attachment: Exhibit A – Site Plan

¹⁴ State of California. 2003. State Historical Building Code, Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 2.7, Section 18955. Available at: http://www.dgs.ca.gov/dsa/AboutUs/shbsb/shbsb_health_safety.aspx. Also see California Building Standards Commission. 2014. California Code of Regulations, Title 24, California Historical Building Code, Section 8-101.2. Washington, DC. p. 4.

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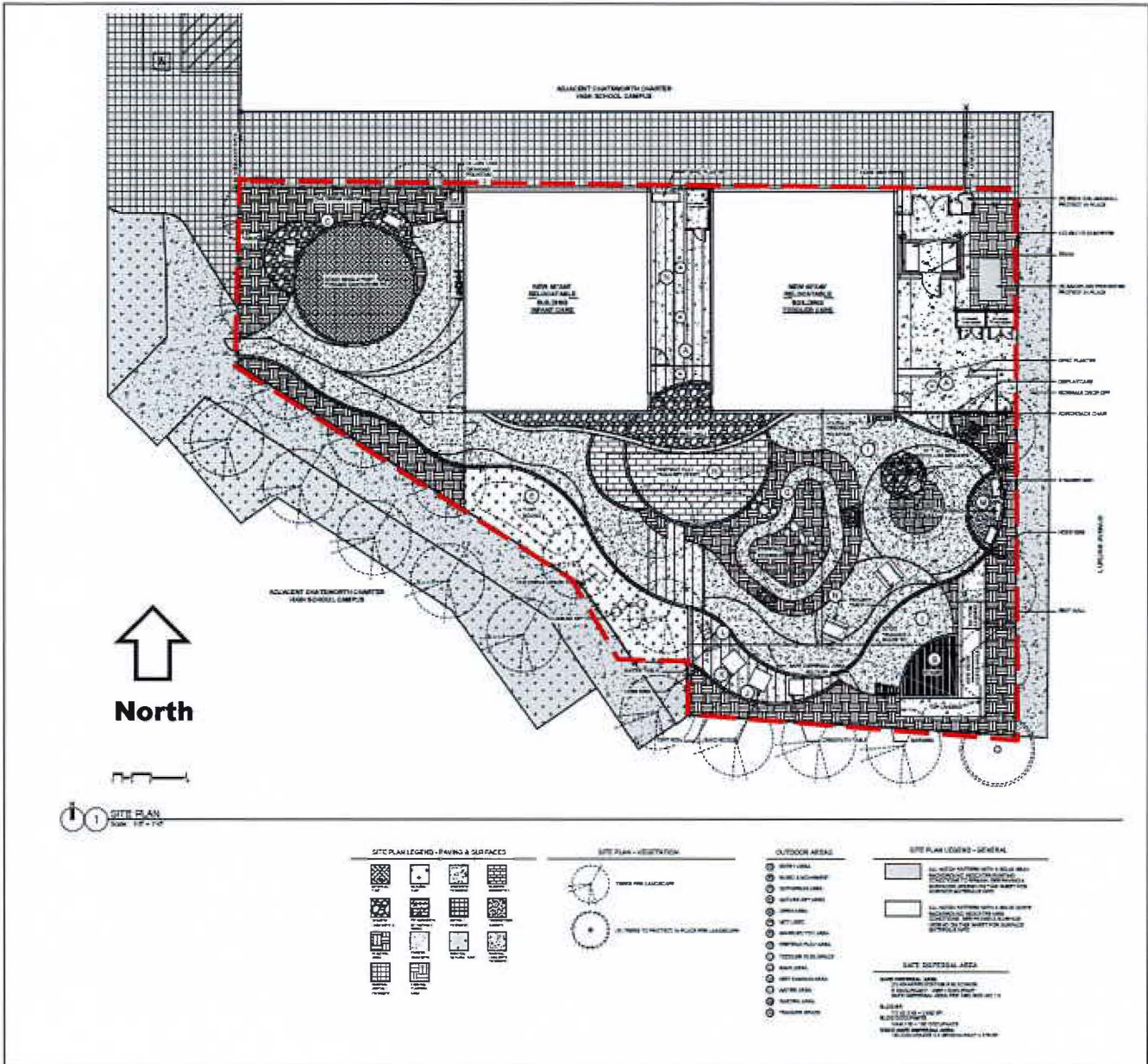


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EXHIBIT A - SITE PLAN (not to scale)



PROJECT SITE

