Los Angeles Unified School District

Office of Environmental Health and Safety

ANDRES CHAIT
Acting 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 June 18 2026
UNTIL July 20 2026
REGISTRAR – RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

2026 134366
FILED
Jun 18 2026
Dean C. Logan, Registrar – Recorder/County Clerk
Electronically signed by MAYA HEAD

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:
Venice High School – Soil Garden Cleanup

Project Location – Specific:

The Venice High School Garden Soil Cleanup Project (Project) will be located on the 28.4-acre Venice High School (Venice HS) campus. The Venice HS campus (Campus) is located at 13000 Venice Boulevard in the Mar Vista neighborhood of the City of Los Angeles. It is bound by Lyceum Avenue to the north, Zanja Avenue to the east, Walgrove Avenue to the south, and Venice Boulevard to the west. The Project will occur on an approximately 0.2-acre area located in the northwest corner of the Campus that is currently being used as a community garden that is also used by the Campus. The Campus is located in an urbanized community surrounded by single-family residences.

Project Location – City:
Los Angeles

Project Location – County:
Los Angeles

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:
The Project entails the implementation of a cleanup plan for arsenic and lead impacted soil following the environmental soil sampling that was conducted as part of the Comprehensive Modernization project at the Campus. The soil clean-up will include excavation and disposal of impacted soil in locations shown in Figure 1.

The impacted soils could not be linked to current activities or structures at the school and are regarded as non-point source contaminants. A complete copy of the report for this investigation is included in the Soil Excavation Plan (SEP) [1]. This SEP was prepared to describe the procedure for removing the soil with elevated arsenic and lead concentrations to below the DTSC background concentration. The soil will be exported to a State-permitted disposal facility and clean soil will be imported to bring the site Project area back to original grade. Upon completion of clean-up activities, the site will be restored to its current use as a community garden.

The SEP also identifies best management practices designed to limit potential short-term risks (e.g., the exposure of students, staff, community members, and onsite workers to chemical of concerns during soil excavation activities) through the proper use of institutional controls, such as engineering controls, security measures, personal protective equipment (PPE), and

[1] LAUSD OEHS. January 2025. "Soil Excavation Plan Venice High School." Los Angeles, California. Prepared by TRC Solutions, Inc.

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adherence to established health and safety procedures, including the application of water spray to suppress fugitive dust emissions during the excavation, the proper handling, transportation and disposal of impacted soil, and enforcing speed limits at the Project site.[2] All soil removal activities will follow generally acceptable practices, institutional controls, and State, federal, and local agency guidelines, including, but not limited to, those of the: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)/National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and Regional Water Quality Control Board. Soil removal will occur in the summer when students and staff are off campus.

The Project will be implemented pursuant to all applicable State, federal, and local regulations, and all applicable LAUSD 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.[3] 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 Venice HS 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).

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[4]]:
- ☐ 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 15330 - Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release or Threat of Release of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substances.*
- ☐ Statutory Exemption:

[2] *Ibid.*
[3] LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023.
[4] CEQA Guidelines can be found at California Code of Regulations Title 14, Chapter 3, Section 15000 - Section 15387.

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Reasons why project is exempt:

Section 15330 - Minor Actions to Prevent, Minimize, Stabilize, Mitigate or Eliminate the Release or Threat of Release of Hazardous Waste or Hazardous Substances.

Class 30 consists of any minor cleanup actions taken to prevent, minimize, stabilize, mitigate, or eliminate the release or threat of release of a hazardous waste or substance which are small or medium removal actions costing $1 million or less.

The Project entails the implementation of a SEP for arsenic and lead impacted soil; excavation of impacted soil; and disposal of impacted soil. Based on the site characterization data, a cleanup plan has been developed for the Site.

The SEP identifies best management practices designed to limit potential short-term risks (e.g., the exposure of students, staff, and onsite workers to AOCs during soil excavation activities) through the proper use of institutional controls, such as engineering controls, security measures, PPE, and adherence to established health and safety procedures, including the application of water spray to suppress fugitive dust emissions during the excavation, the proper handling, transportation and disposal of impacted soil, and enforcing speed limits at the Project site. The Project is estimated to cost approximately $308,775 and will therefore qualify for the Class 30 exemption.

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 urban-residential community.[5] The Project site is not designated as a biologically sensitive location. The nearest significant ecological area to the Project site is the Ballona Wetlands located 1.2 miles south of Venice HS and the nearest critical habitat is the Braunton's milk-vetch, located approximately 5.4 miles northwest of the Campus.[6,7] 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 school operational. 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.

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, 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

[5] City of Los Angeles Planning Department, *Zoning and Information Management System*, http://zimas.lacity.org/, accessed May 2026.
[6] United States Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat Portal, https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html accessed May 2026.
[7] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed May 2026.

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Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure.[8] 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).[9,10]

The Project will include ground-disturbing activities. OEHS will 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.[11] 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.[12] Lastly, any construction and demolition waste shall be recycled to the maximum extent feasible per SC-USS-1 of the SPEIR.[13] 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 Venice HS is Angeles Crest Highway (State Route 2), which is located approximately 21 miles southwest of the Campus.[14] 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 site is not listed on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.[15] Therefore, the Project would 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.*

The Venice High School campus was surveyed in 2004 and assigned a California Historical Resource Status Codes of "3S" and "3CS," which means the subject school appears eligible for National Register and California Register through survey evaluation.[16] The Campus is an excellent example of the school district's reconstruction efforts following the Long Beach earthquake of 1933. The Campus was redesigned in the PWA Moderne architectural style and the primary period of significance is between 1934 and 1937. In 2015, a Character-Defining Features Memorandum (CDFM) was prepared for the campus prior to the comprehensive modernization project. The CDFM identified the contributing features of the historic campus to include the West Building, Administration Building,

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[8] LAUSD OEHS, "Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure," https://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa
[9] LAUSD OEHS, "Standard Conditions of Approval for District Construction, Upgrade, and Improvements Projects," Adopted by the Board of Education on December 12, 2023
[10] LAUSD OEHS, "Tree Trimming and Removal Procedure", *http://achieve.lausd.net/ceqa*.
[11] LAUSD OEHS, "Section 01 4524 Environmental Import/Export Materials Testing", http://www.laschools.org/documents/file?file_id=219798234&show_all_versions_p=t
[12] 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
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, http://gis.planning.lacounty.gov/GIS-NET3_Public/Viewer.html, accessed May 2026.
[15] http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/SiteCleanup/Cortese_List.cfm, accessed May 2026.
[16] LAUSD. 2015. Character-Defining Features Memorandum (CDFM) for Venice High School, 13000 Venice Boulevard, Los Angeles, California, 90064. Prepared by PCR Services Corporation. Los Angeles, CA. Referencing the Phase I Getty Survey conducted on March 15, 2002.

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East Building, Assembly Hall, and front lawn. However, the LAUSD Historic Preservation Specialist determined the landscape space affected by the Project is a non-contributing space and will not impact character-defining features of the Campus. Therefore, the Project will not cause substantial adverse changes in the significance of a historic resource.

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Signed by:

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

Date:

6/15/26

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Figure 1. Venice HS Community Garden Site Plan (Not to Scale)