

2. Introduction

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the proposed LAUSD School Upgrade Program (SUP) is considered a “project” and therefore is required to be compliant through an environmental analysis. “Project,” as defined by the CEQA Guidelines, means “the whole of an action, which has a potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment, and that is: (1)... An activity directly undertaken by any public agency¹ [school district]... (2) An activity undertaken by a person² which is supported in whole or in part through public agency contacts, grants, subsidies, loans, or other forms of assistance from one or more public agencies... (3) An activity involving the issuance to a person of a lease, permit, license, certificate, or other entitlement for use by one or more public agencies.”³ The activity may be subject to several discretionary approvals by governmental agencies.⁴ A Lead Agency is “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project which may have a significant effect upon the environment.”⁵ The LAUSD has the principal responsibility for approval of the SUP. For this reason, the LAUSD is the CEQA Lead Agency for this project.

CEQA requires that all state and local governmental agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects over which they have discretionary authority prior to taking action on those projects. The EIR is the public document designed to provide decision makers and the public with an analysis of the environmental effects of the proposed project, to indicate possible ways to reduce or avoid environmental damage, and to identify alternatives to the project. The EIR must also disclose significant environmental impacts that cannot be avoided; growth inducing impacts; effects not found to be significant; and significant cumulative impacts of all past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects.

The intent of the EIR is to provide sufficient information on the potential environmental impacts of the proposed SUP to allow the LAUSD to make an informed decision regarding approval of the project. Specific discretionary actions to be reviewed by the LAUSD are described later in Section 3.4, *Intended Uses of the EIR*.

¹ “Public agency” includes any state agency, board, or commission and any local or regional agency, as defined in these Guidelines. It does not include the courts of the state. This term does not include agencies of the federal government. (14 CCR Section 15376)

² “Person” includes any person, firm, association, organization, partnership, business, trust, corporation, limited liability company, company, district, city, county, city and county, town, the state, and any of the agencies and political subdivisions of such entities, and to the extent permitted by federal law, the United States, or any of its agencies or political subdivisions. (14 CCR Section 15379)

³ 14 CCR Section 15378(a)

⁴ 14 CCR Section 15378(c)

⁵ PCR Section 21067

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This EIR has been prepared in accordance with requirements of the:

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended (Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq.)
- State Guidelines for the Implementation of the CEQA of 1970 (CEQA Guidelines), as amended (California Code of Regulations, Sections 15000 et seq.)

The overall purpose of this EIR is to inform the lead agency, responsible agencies, decision makers, and the general public of the potential environmental effects from implementation of the SUP. This EIR addresses the potential environmental effects of the SUP, including effects that may be significant and adverse, and evaluates alternatives to the SUP.

2.2 NOTICE OF PREPARATION

Per the CEQA Guidelines Section 15082, the LAUSD determined that an EIR would be required for this project and issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) on November 16, 2013. The NOP and comments received during the public review period (November 18, 2013 to December 18, 2013) can be found in Appendix A. The NOP process is used to help determine the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the EIR. Public outreach for the NOP included distribution using the following methods:

- Publication on November 18, 2013 in the Los Angeles Daily News (English) and La Opinion (Spanish) newspapers.
- Direct mail via USPS certified mail to 36 State and local agencies.
- Distributed to 15 State agencies through the Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse
- Posted at the Los Angeles County

The NOP was also available for review at the following locations:

- LAUSD Facilities Services Division Office, 333 South Beaudry Avenue, 28th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017
- LAUSD Office of Environmental Health and Safety website at <http://www.lausd-oehs.org/documents.asp>

Comments received during the NOP public review period are in Appendix A. A total of five agencies submitted comments to the NOP. Table 2-1 summarizes the issues identified by the commenting agencies, along with a reference to the sections of this EIR where the issues are addressed.

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Table 2-1 NOP Comment Summary

Commenting Agency	Comment Type	Comment Summary	Issue Addressed In:
South Coast Air Quality Management District (12/24,2013)	Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests a copy of the Draft EIR and all air quality modeling files. • States air quality regulations, methodology, guidance documents, and data sources for preparation of analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 5.2, <i>Air Quality</i>
Native American Heritage Commission (11/18/2013)	Cultural Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter identifies state and federal statues relating to Native American historic properties and resources, and Native American Contacts. 	Section 5.5, <i>Cultural Resources</i>
County of Los Angeles Fire Department (12/19/2013)	Fire Protection Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Development Unit: Fire code ordinance requirements for construction, access, water mains, fire flows and fire hydrants. • Forestry division: Statutory responsibilities include erosion control, watershed management, rare and endangered species, vegetation, fuel modification, archeological and cultural resources, and oak tree ordinance. 	Section 5.4, <i>Biological Resources</i> Section 5.5, <i>Cultural Resources</i> Section 5.9, <i>Hydrology and Water Quality</i> Section 5.18, <i>Utilities and Service Systems</i>
City of Rancho Palos Verdes (11/26/2013)	Portable classrooms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation and notification of when temporary/portable classroom are replaced, added or relocated. • Aesthetic and traffic impacts from portables classrooms • Notification of any projects at 2 schools in city. 	Chapter 4, <i>Project Description</i> (CEQA requirements)
California Department of Transportation, District 7 (12/04/2013)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter outlining elements of a typical traffic study. 	Section 5.17, <i>Transportation and Traffic</i>

2.3 SCOPE OF THIS EIR

Based on past experience and the magnitude of the proposed SUP, the LAUSD staff determined that an EIR should be prepared. In compliance with CEQA Guidelines, LAUSD did not prepare an Initial Study (IS) to reduce the scope of the EIR because the EIR includes an analysis of all 17 CEQA topics and 1 additional LAUSD topic (pedestrian safety).⁶ The EIR is required to identify any potentially significant adverse impacts and recommend mitigation that would reduce the impacts to less than insignificant.⁷

The information in Chapter 4, *Program Description*, establishes the basis for analyzing future SUP-related environmental impacts. However, further environmental review by the LAUSD may be required as more detailed information and plans are drafted on a site-specific, project-by-project basis.

⁶ 14 CCR Section 15060(d).

⁷ 14 CCR Sections 15126.2 and 15126.4.

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2.4 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

All impact thresholds in each of the 18 environmental resources assessed are analyzed in detail in Chapter 5 of this EIR. Impact significance levels are summarized in Chapter 1, *Executive Summary*, Table 1-1.

2.4.1 Impacts Considered Less Than Significant

SUP-related impacts to the following 12 environmental topics were identified as less than significant, after compliance with regulatory requirements and implementation of LAUSD Standards, as discussed in Chapter 5.

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Biological Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Utilities and Service Systems

2.4.2 Impacts Considered Potentially Significant and Unavoidable

SUP-related impacts under four environmental topics were identified as potentially significant and unavoidable.

- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Noise
- Transportation and Traffic

The LAUSD, as the Lead Agency, determined that unavoidable significant adverse impacts would likely result from the SUP; therefore, the LAUSD must prepare a “Statement of Overriding Considerations” before it can approve the SUP. A Statement of Overriding Considerations explains that the decision-making body (Board of Education) has balanced the benefits of the SUP against its potentially significant and unavoidable environmental effects and has determined that the benefits outweigh the adverse effects and, therefore, the environmental impacts are considered to be acceptable.

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2.5 FINAL EIR CERTIFICATION

This EIR is being circulated for public review for a period of 45 days. Interested agencies and members of the public are invited to provide written comments on the EIR to the LAUSD address shown on the title page of this document and in the Notice of Availability (NOA). Upon completion of the 45-day review period, the LAUSD will review all written comments received and prepare written responses for each comment. A Final EIR (FEIR) will incorporate all of the comments received, responses to the comments, and any changes to the EIR that result from the comments received. This FEIR will be reviewed and considered by the LAUSD Board of Education for potential EIR certification. All agencies, organizations, and interested parties that commented on the EIR will be notified of the availability of the FEIR and the date of the public hearing before the Board.

The EIR is available for review at the following locations:

- LAUSD Facilities Services Division Office, 333 South Beaudry Avenue, 28th Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017
- LAUSD Office of Environmental Health and Safety website at <http://www.lausd-oehs.org/documents.asp>

2.5.1 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

No mitigation measures are required by this EIR. Therefore, no Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program will be considered for approval by the Board of Education when the Board considers the Final EIR for certification.

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