

**LBUSD Gompers Elementary School HVAC Project
Notice of Exemption (NOE)**

The Long Beach Unified School District (District), as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), proposes to conduct repair, technology, accessibility, air conditioning, safety and security upgrades at Gompers Elementary School in order to improve classroom conditions, provide up-to-date equipment for student use, and create a safe educational environment.

Project Location

Gompers Elementary School is located at 5206 Briercrest Avenue, Lakewood, California 90713. Gompers Elementary School is located on an approximately 10.22-acre property comprised of seven single story permanent buildings and 11 relocatable / portable buildings totaling 65,851 square feet.

Description of Project

Goals and objectives under Measure E address four key areas which consists of repairs, technology, air conditioning and safety. The objective of the Proposed Project is for the District to conduct repair aging and deteriorating school bathrooms, meet disabled persons accessibility requirements, upgrade fire safety and school security systems, replace outdated electrical systems and wiring, provide air conditioning, and retrofit the school for earthquake safety. These improvements include the following more detailed actions:

Repairs

- Due to District campuses being built 60 to 70 years ago, the outdated buildings require repairs to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility requirements, meet earthquake standards and to improve on-site building conditions and utilities such as leaking roofs, restroom replacement, fire alarm and security upgrades, and plumbing improvements.

Technology

- Improvements will include the installation of the Audio Visual Extron systems using wall mounted projectors over markerboards in all permanent teaching spaces.

Air Conditioning

- Air conditioning equipment will be upgraded in all classrooms, offices, workrooms, teacher's lounges, library, auditorium, cafeteria, kitchen, and rooms with modern, energy efficient systems to improve school conditions and prevent class cancellations due to overheated classrooms.

Reasons Why Project Is Exempt:

The proposed activity is a project subject to CEQA. However, it is exempt from further environmental analysis under Class 1, *Existing Facilities* (CEQA Guidelines §15301), Class 2, *Replacement or Reconstruction* (CEQA Guidelines §15302), and Class 11 *Accessory Structures* (CEQA Guidelines §15311). Class 1 categorical exemption 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. Class 2 consists of the replacement or reconstruction of 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 of the structure replaced. Class 11 consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities.

The Proposed Project will result in interior building improvements, ADA compliance upgrades, and path of travel improvements. The improvements will not involve an increase in student capacity, and will include repairs, maintenance, reconstruction, and minor additions to an existing school campus. The Proposed Project will not result in significant environmental impacts and is exempt from further review under the conditions in Article 19. Therefore, the application of Class 1, Class 2, and Class 11 categorical exemptions is appropriate for the Proposed Project. The Proposed Project does not have the potential to trigger any of the exceptions identified in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2. Consequently, as documented below, the Proposed Project is exempt from further CEQA review.

- (a) **Location.** The improvements will occur entirely within the existing campus, which is located in an urbanized community. The existing conditions on and around the elementary school are disturbed and paved ground and are not considered environmentally sensitive. Minor ground disturbance would occur during construction but will be limited to the existing school property on previously disturbed surfaces. The Proposed Project will not impact environmentally sensitive areas or an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern. This exception does not apply to the Proposed Project.
- (b) **Cumulative Impact.** Once Proposed Project has been approved by the District's Board of Education, project construction activities could begin in Summer 2023 and be completed within 12 to 15 months. Details of any other future projects are not yet clearly defined and thereby cannot be further evaluated at this time. Further, the majority of impacts associated with the Proposed Project will be temporary (the construction timeframe) and are limited to the immediate vicinity of Gompers Elementary School. As such, no other cumulatively considerable projects have been identified that could incrementally contribute to the impacts associated with the Proposed Project. This exception does not apply to the Proposed Project.
- (c) **Significant Effect.** The HVAC installation, the ADA compliance upgrades, interior improvements, window repairs and other upgrades are not considered an unusual circumstance as campus updates are not unusual for school sites. All upgrades associated with the Proposed Project would be installed on or within existing facilities. Therefore, the Proposed Project would not appear visually incompatible with existing equipment and accessories on the Project site. Normal operations will be similar and consistent with current uses within the Project boundary.

The Proposed Project is located within a disturbed, urbanized environment in Lakewood. The campus vegetation is limited to ornamental landscaping, and it is anticipated that no candidate, sensitive, or special status species are anticipated to exist on or around the elementary school. The majority of work associated with the Proposed Project would occur in the interior of existing buildings; only minor accessibility upgrades would result in minor ground disturbing activities. Thus, the Proposed Project and will not involve the removal of any vegetation or scenic trees, nor would it impact any scenic vistas within the immediate area.

Therefore, no reasonable possibility exists that the Proposed Project would have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. Therefore, this exception does not apply to this Project. Please refer to the Initial Study Checklist (IS Checklist) for further details on potential impacts.

- (d) **Scenic Highways.** The nearest highways to the Proposed Project site are Interstate 406 (I-405) and Pacific Coast Highway, California State Highway 91 and California State Highway 19. I-405 runs approximately 1.53 miles east of the site, Highway 91 is located 1.7 miles north of the site, and Highway 19 is located 1.15 miles west of the site. Although portions of California State Highway 1 are classified as eligible for state scenic highway designation, the section nearest the Proposed Project site is not identified as being eligible or officially designated; and California State Highway 19 is not classified as eligible for state scenic highway designation (Caltrans 2019). Therefore, no impact to scenic highways would occur, and this exception does not apply to the Project.
- (e) **Hazardous Waste Sites.** Due to the time of original construction (1955) and campus expansion that has occurred since, it is likely that Gompers Elementary School contains asbestos-containing materials (ACM)/asbestos-containing building materials (ACBM) and lead-based paint (LBP). However, the construction activities would be monitored and comply with federal and state law to prevent exposure to hazardous material and reduce potential impacts during construction and operation to a level below significant. The Proposed Project site is not on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65862.5 (SWRCB 2022; DTSC 2022); therefore, implementation of the Proposed Project would not result in an impact associated with known hazardous materials sites. This exception does not apply to the Notice of Exemption.
- (f) **Historical Resources.** As part of the District-Wide Cultural Resources Assessment, PCR services concluded that Gompers Elementary School is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) under Criterion A, B, C and the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) under Criterion 1, 2, 3.

References:

California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2019. California Scenic Highway Mapping System. Online URL: http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/LandArch/16 livability/scenic_highways/

State Water Resources Control Board. 2022. GeoTracker Database. Online URL: <https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>

Department of Toxic Substances Control. 2022. EnviroStor Database. Online URL: <http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/>

Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). 2017. Cultural Resource Assessment for Long Beach Unified School District. Online URL: <http://lbschoolbonds.net/pdfs/lbusd-part1-historic-resources-report-20170206-web.pdf>