

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

To: Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

From: Saugus Union School District
24930 Avenue Stanford
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

County Clerk
County of Los Angeles

12400 Imperial Hwy
Norwalk, CA 90650

Saugus Union School District Transportation M&O Facility Parking Lot Project
Project Title

26501 Ruether Avenue
Project Location – Specific

Santa Clarita
Project Location – City

Los Angeles
Project Location – County

The District proposes to expand vehicle parking at its existing Transportation M&O Facility. The proposed project would grade and pave the approximately 0.5-acre site to provide supplemental parking. Improvements would be made with the additions of solar lighting to the parking lot; construction of a vehicle barn (exact size and location to be determined) and electric bus vehicle charging stations; installation of an underground electrical conduit to power the vehicle barn and charging stations; and the creation of a stormwater infiltration area. The existing concrete curb would be cut out to allow vehicles to pass through. A portion of the existing fence would be removed, and new portions of the fence would be constructed around the remaining perimeter of the project site with the addition of a rolling gate with opener.

The proposed improvements will benefit the District's M&O operations staff and the general community will benefit from reduced emissions by expanded electrical vehicle use.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Saugus Union School District
Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Saugus Union School District
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

Exempt Status: (check one below)

- Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: § 15303, Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; §15311, Class 11, Accessory Structures.
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number:

The construction of a vehicle barn, installation of fencing and solar lighting, and implementation of electrical conduit for the new vehicle barn and new electric car charging stations are covered under the Class 3 categorical exemption as small and accessory structures.

The expansion of the parking lot qualifies for a Class 11 categorical exemption as an accessory structure/small parking lot.

The proposed project was also reviewed for possible exceptions under Section 15300.2 and found that the exceptions do not apply. See Attachment to Notice of Exemption for further explanation of the evaluation, which is available at the Saugus Union School District, 24930 Avenue Stanford, Santa Clarita, CA 91355.

Reasons why project is exempt

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Contact Person:

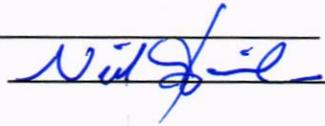
Area Code/Telephone/Extension:

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption findings
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project Yes No

Date
Received for
Filing:

Signature:



Title:

Asst. Superintendent of Business

Attachment to Notice of Exemption
Transportation M&O Facility Parking Lot Project
SAUGUS UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

The Saugus Union School District (District) proposes to construct a parking lot expansion at its existing Transportation Maintenance & Operations (M&O) Facility at 26501 Ruether Avenue, Santa Clarita (proposed project). This supplemental information provides justification for the Categorical Exemption pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines under California Code of Regulations, Title 14 § 15303 and 15311.

1. EXISTING CONDITIONS

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located at 26501 Ruether Avenue, in the City of Santa Clarita, in Los Angeles County (project site). The project site is located on the northeast portion of the District's existing Transportation Maintenance Facility (Assessor Parcel Number [APN] 2836-017-903). The project site is bordered by Ruether Avenue to the east, Hope Canyon Road to the west, and commercial uses to the north and south. Regional access to the facility is provided via Interstate-5 (I-5) and California State Route 14 (SR-14), approximately five miles to the west and three miles to the east, respectively.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The 0.5-acre project site is an undeveloped dirt lot on the District's existing 2.96-acre Transportation M&O Facility. The Transportation M&O Facility is used to store and maintain the District's current fleet of school buses. It includes an administration building, maintenance/repair garage, and a paved parking lot for school buses and other District vehicles. The project site is located on the northeastern portion of the Transportation M&O Facility and is currently undeveloped and separated from the bus ports by an existing fence on the west side of the project site. Main vehicular access is provided via Ruether Avenue.

GENERAL PLAN AND ZONING

The project site has a zoning and general plan land use designation of Business Park (BP). The BP zoning and general plan land use designation provides for mixed employment districts in areas accessible to transportation and visible from freeways and major arterials and is intended to promote the development of master-planned environments with a high quality of design and construction (City of Santa Clarita, 2022).

SURROUNDING LAND USES

The project site is surrounded by a mixture of commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. All properties surrounding the project site have a zoning and land use designation of Business Park (BP). No sensitive uses are located near or within the project site.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The District proposes to expand vehicle parking at its existing Transportation M&O Facility. The proposed project would grade and pave the approximately 0.5-acre site to provide supplemental parking. Improvements to the project site would include the addition of solar lighting to the parking lot; construction of a vehicle barn (exact size and location to be determined) and electric bus vehicle charging stations; installation of an underground electrical conduit to power the vehicle barn and charging stations; and the creation of a stormwater infiltration area along the northern edge of the project site. The existing concrete curb would be cut out to allow vehicles to pass through. A portion of

the existing fence would be removed, and new portions of the fence would be constructed around the remaining perimeter of the project site with the addition of a rolling gate with opener on the south side.

CONSTRUCTION

All construction equipment and workers will be located within the boundaries of the project site and contractors will adhere to construction noise regulations.

3. REASONS THAT THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT

The proposed project is exempt from further environmental review under the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code §§ 21000 et seq.) because it is consistent with Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures; Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land; and Class 11, Accessory Structures, as explained below.

» **Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures (CEQA Guidelines § 15303)** consists of the 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 in the exterior of the structure.

The proposed project would include the construction of a vehicle barn, and installation of fencing and solar lighting within the parking lot, and implementation of an electrical conduit for the new vehicle barn and new electric car charging stations, which are covered under the Class 3 categorical exemption as small and accessory structures. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from further CEQA analysis under Section 15303.

» **Class 11, Accessory Structures (CEQA Guidelines § 15311)** consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including, but not limited to, (b) small parking lots.

The expansion of the parking lot within the District's Transportation M&O Facility qualifies for a Class 11 categorical exemption as an accessory structure/small parking lot. Therefore, the proposed project is exempt from further CEQA analysis under Section 15311.

4. REVIEW OF EXCEPTIONS TO THE CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

The proposed project has been reviewed under CEQA Guidelines § 15300.2 - Exceptions, for any characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate findings that the proposed project is exempt from CEQA. Each exception is listed below followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the proposed project.

(a) **Location.** Classes 3,4,5,6 and 11 are qualified by consideration of where the project would be located—a project that is ordinarily insignificant in its impact on the environment may in a particularly sensitive environment be significant. Therefore, these classes are considered to apply all instances, except where the project may impact on an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern where designated, precisely mapped and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The project site is located on an undeveloped lot and is part of the existing Transportation M&O Facility. It is surrounded by a mixture of commercial, industrial, and institutional uses. Due to the project site's and facility's developed nature and frequent human disturbance, it does not contain any sensitive biological species or habitat. Although a riverine system is mapped on the project site, it contains flowing surface water for only part of the year (from a few days to a few weeks), and the water table usually lies well below the ground surface for most of the

growing season. Thus, the environment is not particularly sensitive, and the proposed project's impacts on the riverine system would not be significant (FWS 2022). Therefore, this exception does not apply to the project.

(b) Cumulative Impacts. All exemptions for these classes are inapplicable when the cumulative impact of successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time is significant.

The District does not intend to construct any additional projects of the same type at the project site over time. Construction schedules at other District school improvement sites could overlap with the proposed project. However, proposed improvements at each project site would be executed individually and are anticipated to have site-specific impacts. Similar projects at nearby schools would not have an impact on the proposed project. Thus, the proposed project, when combined with cumulative District projects, would not create a significant cumulative under CEQA, and no cumulative impacts will occur. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

(c) Significant Effects. A categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.

There is no reasonable possibility that the proposed project will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances. The proposed project will not increase the number of busses or other District vehicles on the project site. Access to the new parking lot would be provided from the existing Transportation M&O Facility and would not require the implementation of a new driveway or access point. Thus, the proposed project is not anticipated to increase traffic in the area surrounding the project site. The construction manager will execute construction activities per current, local, state, and federal laws, regulations, construction Best Management Practices, District standards, and guidelines.

There will be some temporary noise and vibration impacts associated with construction activities. However, all temporary construction and vibration impacts, and operational noise impacts, are considered less than significant. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

Temporary Construction Noise

Noise created by construction within 300 feet of residentially zoned properties is allowed between the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturday but is prohibited during early morning, evening, nighttime hours, and all hours on Sundays and major holidays, according to the City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code (SCMC) Section 11.44.080 (City of Santa Clarita 2022). Although the project site is surrounded by commercial and industrial properties that are zoned as BP, the proposed project's daily schedule for construction is anticipated to comply with the City's construction noise regulations, and therefore, construction activities will occur within the allowable construction hours of the SCMC. Furthermore, there are no residentially zoned properties within 300 feet of the project site; therefore, construction activities will occur within an allowable location. Construction activities will include site preparation and grading of the project site, subsequent paving for the parking lot, construction of the vehicle barn, installation of electrical utilities, and modifications to the existing curb and fencing. These activities will utilize equipment such as, but not limited to, dozers, backhoes, excavators, loaders, rollers, and construction vehicles for delivery and transport of equipment, material, and workers.

The nearest sensitive receptors are residential properties located approximately 0.75-mile northwest of the project site. Project construction will temporarily expose the nearby sensitive receptors to elevated noise levels. However, this will be temporary and cease upon completion and as stated above, construction noise will be limited to the allowable construction hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays, if necessary. In addition, construction equipment and trucks will utilize the best available noise control techniques (e.g., improved mufflers, equipment re-design, use of intake silencers, ducts, engine enclosures, and acoustically

attenuating shields, shrouds, or temporary noise barriers), wherever feasible. Temporary construction noise impacts will be less than significant.

Temporary Construction Vibration

Construction can generate varying degrees of ground vibration, depending on the construction procedures and equipment. Operation of construction equipment generates vibrations that spread through the ground and diminish with distance from the source. The effect on buildings in the vicinity of the construction site varies depending on soil type, ground strata, and receptor-building construction. The effects from vibration can range from no perceptible effects at the lowest vibration levels, to low rumbling sounds and perceptible vibrations at moderate levels, to slight structural damage at the highest levels. Vibration from construction activities rarely reaches the levels that can damage structures.

For reference, a vibration level of 0.2 inches per second (in/sec) peak particle velocity (PPV) is used as the limit for non-engineered timber and masonry buildings (which could be applied to the surrounding residential structures) (Federal Transit Administration 2018). At a distance of greater than 25 feet, vibration levels from typical construction equipment including vibratory rollers attenuate to less than the 0.2 in/sec PPV. Industrial and commercial properties are located adjacent to the northern and southern boundary of the project site; however, construction of the proposed project would not result in vibration levels that would disrupt the operation of adjacent properties or damage any structures near the project site. Therefore, vibration levels will not exceed the 0.2 in/sec PPV threshold, and vibration impacts will be less than significant.

Operational Noise

The proposed project will not introduce any new noise sources to the project area. The project site is located within the existing transportation maintenance facility, which is used to store and maintain the District's fleet of busses and other vehicles. Implementation of the proposed project would not change the use of the existing transportation M&O facility; therefore, the proposed project would not significantly increase noise levels near or within the project site.

- (d) Scenic Highways.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which 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.

There are no designated state scenic highways near the project site or the Transportation M&O Facility. According to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) California Scenic Highway Mapping System, the closest officially designated state scenic highway is State Route 2, approximately 22 miles to the southeast of the project site. Additionally, Interstates 5 (I-5) is eligible for designation; however, it is located approximately 4.3 miles west of the project site (Caltrans 2022). Construction and operation of the proposed project would be completely within the project; thus, the proposed project will not affect scenic resources along any scenic highways. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (e) Hazardous Waste Sites.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project located on a site which is included on any list compiled pursuant to Government Code § 65962.5.

California Government Code Section 65962.5 requires the compiling of lists of the following types of hazardous materials sites: hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action; hazardous waste discharges for which the State Water Quality Control Board has issued certain types of orders; public drinking water wells containing detectable levels of organic contaminants; underground storage tanks with reported unauthorized releases; and solid waste disposal facilities from which hazardous waste has migrated.

Five environmental databases were searched for hazardous materials sites on the site and within a quarter mile radius:

- » EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC 2022)
- » GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB 2022)
- » EJScreen. US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2022a)
- » EnviroMapper. US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA 2022b)
- » Solid Waste Information System. California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle 2022)

According to the DTSC's EnviroStor, there are no designated cleanup sites within a quarter mile from the project site. Additionally, according to the SWCRB's GeoTracker, there is one open Cleanup Program Site near the project site that has been inactive since January 2015; however, it is located approximately 0.2 mile northeast of the project site, and would not affect the proposed project.

The project site and its surroundings are not identified in any of the other databases and are not identified as a hazardous materials site pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5. Therefore, the project would not create a hazard to the public. This exception does not apply to the proposed project.

- (f) Historical Resources.** A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of historical resources. Under Public Resource Code § 21084.1, a historical resource is a resource listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. Additionally, historical resources included in a local register of historical resources are presumed to be historically or culturally significant, and a lead agency can determine whether the resource may be an historical resource.

There are no historic resources on or within a 0.25-mile radius of the project site that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NPS 2022), the California Register of Historical Resources (OHP 2022a), or as a California State Historical Landmark (OHP 2022b). Therefore, implementation of the proposed project will not cause significant impacts to historical resources, and the historical resources exception will not apply to the proposed project.

5. CONCLUSION

The proposed project at the District's Transportation M&O facility is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15303 and 15311. As substantiated in this document, the proposed project will not meet conditions specified in § 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines, and the proposed project is categorically exempt under Class 3 and 11.

6. REFERENCES

Saugus Union School District. 2022. Saugus Union School District. <https://www.saugusd.org/home>.

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California Department of Transportation (Caltrans).2022. California Highway System. <https://caltrans.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=465dfd3d807c46cc8e8057116f1aaca>
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City of Santa Clarita. 2011. City of Santa Clarita General Plan Land Use Element. <https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/SantaClarita/html/SantaClaritaGP/2%20-%20Land%20Use%20Element.pdf>.

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City of Santa Clarita Transit. Transit Maintenance Facility. <https://santaclaritatransit.com/about-us/transit-maintenance-facility/>.

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<https://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/map/?myaddress=26501+Ruether+Ave%2C+Santa+Clarita%2C+CA+91350>.

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https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21445.

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<https://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/map/?CMD=runreport&myaddress=26501+Ruether+Ave%2C+Santa+Clarita%2C+CA+91350>.

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<https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.HTML>.