SUPPLEMENT TO NOTICE OF EXEMPTION
JAMES FOSTER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL MODERNIZATION
Saugus Union School District

In 2018, the Saugus Union School District ("District") filed a Notice of Exemption for plans to construct two 1-story permanent buildings with four classrooms each for a total of 8 new classrooms. As many as 13 portable classrooms or buildings will be removed, so there will be no net increase in classrooms. The plan also included relocation of the child-care facility to a new location near the kindergarten on the north side of the campus.

The relocation of the child-care facility was completed, but the District now intends to modify the remaining portion of the project. The District will remove the portable classrooms identified before but will build a 2-story building with 10 classrooms and a separate Flex (Science) Classroom on its campus at 22500 Pamplico Drive in the City of Santa Clarita in Los Angeles County.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

James Foster Elementary School

Project Location: James Foster Elementary School is at 22500 Pamplico Drive in the City of Santa Clarita, Los Angeles County. The school is opposite from the intersection of Pamplico Drive with Carnegie Avenue. Foster Elementary School is about 5.1 miles northwest of State Route 14 (SR-14) and about 3.5 miles northeast of Interstate 5 (I-5). See Figure 1, *Location and Aerial Photograph*.

Existing Conditions: The James Foster Elementary School campus is one of 15 elementary schools in the Saugus Union School District. The James Foster Elementary School houses students in transitional kindergarten to 6th grade, and K-6 enrollment in the 2019-20 school year was 620 students.[1] A child development program (CDP) is offered to four-year-olds (and three-year-olds as capacity permits); children in this program are in addition to the K-6 enrollment. The 7.7-acre campus, which opened in 1980s and was developed with 5 single-story permanent buildings totaling 32,906 square feet; 10 portable classrooms totaling 11,040 square feet; and a 2,400-square-foot CDP building. The school's capacity is 650 students.[2] In 2019, the CDP building was relocated to the northern part of the campus to the west of the parking lot. The permanent school buildings are mostly in the northeast quadrant of the campus; the portable buildings and the hardcourts are mostly in the southeast quadrant; and the playfield is on the west half of the campus (see Figure 1).

The campus is on the west slope of a small ridge; the project site, in the southeast part of the campus, is flat.

Campus access is via one driveway (Myrin Court) from Pamplico Drive. The school's parking lot is at the northeast end of the campus and is contiguous with a driveway for Pamplico Park, which extends eastward and has access from Pamplico Drive (see Figure 1).

Surrounding Land Uses: The project site is in a residential neighborhood and surrounded by single-family residential uses to the south; to the north opposite Pamplico Drive; and to the west opposite Denoya Drive. Pamplico Park, 7.6

[1] California Department of Education (CDE). 2020, August 20 (accessed). Data & Statistics, Demographics, DataQuest. https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/

[2] Saugus Union School District (District). 2016, April 26. 2016 Measure EE Master Plan. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rfeQ6AiVngFuOY5dtUnkDhIbY2u6-YU4/view

acres, abuts the east side of the campus (see Figure 1). Pamplico Park contains a basketball court, a child play area, picnic tables, and restrooms.[3]

Saugus Union School District

The Saugus Union School District spans about 94 square miles in the City of Santa Clarita and unincorporated Los Angeles County to the north; districtwide enrollment in 2019-20 was 9,704.[4,5]

PROPOSED PROJECT

The proposed project involves the construction of one two-story building with 10 classrooms and a separate Flex (Science) Classroom (see Figure 2, *Site Plan*).

The removal of the existing portables was approved in 2018. As discussed above, the proposed project is a modification to the 2018 project. Instead of the construction of two one-story buildings with four classroom each (8 classrooms total), the proposed project would construction one two-story building with 10 classrooms and a separate Flex (Science) Classroom for a total of 11 classrooms. This proposed project will not result in a net increase in classrooms.

REASONS WHY 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 Sections 21000 et seq.) because it is consistent with the Class 2 Categorical Exemption (CEQA Guidelines Section 15302).

Section 15302. Replacement or Reconstruction. Class 2 consists of 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 as the structure replaced.

As discussed above under "Proposed Project," the proposed project involves the construction of one classroom building with 10 classrooms and one flexible classroom building for a total of 11 classrooms, which represents a net decrease of two classrooms.

SECTION 15300.2. EXCEPTIONS TO A CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

Review of Possible Exceptions to the Categorical Exemption

CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2 sets forth several exceptions to categorical exemptions. Each exception is listed below, followed by an assessment of whether that exception applies to the proposed project.

Cumulative Impact: 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 proposed project is part of the District's 2016 Facilities Master Plan, which includes improvements to all 15 District schools. Improvements to fire, safety, and security systems; utilities; site improvements; technology; energy conservation; maintenance and repair; and landscaping are planned. The Master Plan includes on-site capacity

[3] City of Santa Clarita. 2020, August 20 (accessed). City Parks and Facilities: Pamplico Park. https://www.santa-clarita.com/Home/Components/FacilityDirectory/FacilityDirectory/68/33.

[4] Saugus Union School District. 2019, June 11. 2019-2020 Adoption Budget Report. https://tb2cdn.schoolwebmasters.com/accnt_533114/site_533115/Documents/FY1920-Budget-Adoption-Executive-Summary.pdf

[5] California Department of Education (CDE). 2020. DataQuest.

expansions to accommodate forecast enrollment growth over the 2015-2025 period but does not involve construction of new schools.

The project site is already developed as a TK–6 school, and the proposed project would not change the use of the existing school facility. A net decrease of 2 classrooms would not generate increased student population or induce growth in the area. The school would accommodate educational facilities demands and would not create the need for additional successive projects at James Foster School.

The District covers approximately 94 square miles. District schools are spread across a wide area of northwest and north-central Santa Clarita and adjoining unincorporated area,[6] such that impacts from one school (such as traffic or noise) would not combine with impacts of projects at other schools to cause significant cumulative impacts. The cumulative impacts exception would not apply to the proposed project.

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.

The project site is within the boundaries of an existing campus developed with various school facilities and is in a built-out urban neighborhood. The project site is on the west slope of a small ridge that rises from about 1,280 feet at Dry Canyon Channel (about 1,500 feet to the west) to approximately 1,620 feet about 1,100 feet to the east. The campus is on a west-northwest slope of about 4 percent, with elevations ranging from about 1,400 feet at the southwest corner of the playfield to about 1,430 feet at the eastern campus boundary. Much of the City of Santa Clarita is built on the western foothills of the San Gabriel Mountains and the southern foothills of the Northern Transverse Ranges, and slopes are not unusual in the city. The proposed project would be located to the west of the existing permanent buildings on-site, toward the center of the campus. The proposed project would extend a maximum of two stories above grade, which is similar to the maximum height of existing building on site. Thus, project development would not block views from Pamplico Park next to the eastern (upgrade) side of the school.

The existing school is in operation, and no unusual circumstances are anticipated with the project construction. The significant effects exception does not apply to the proposed project.

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 is no designated state scenic highway near Foster Elementary School. The nearest such highway is State Route 27, the Topanga Canyon State Scenic Highway, about 20 miles to the south. State Route 126, approximately 4.4 miles to the west, and Interstate 5, approximately 3.6 miles to the west, are eligible but not officially designated state scenic highways.[7] The project site is not recognizable from these eligible scenic highways due to distance, topography, and intervening development. The project site is already developed with school facilities and does not contain historic buildings, rock outcropping, or similar resources. Trees on-site are ornamental landscape trees and do not pre-date the school; therefore, they are not considered scenic resources relative to a state scenic highway. Project implementation would not impact any scenic resources, and this exception would not apply to the proposed project.

[6] GreenInfo Network. 2020, August 2020 (accessed). California School Campus Database. http://www.mapcollaborator.org/mapcollab_cscd/?base=map&y=34.41314&x=-118.61938&z=11&layers=notes%2Cpolygons%2Cschoolboundaries%2Cschoolcentroids%2Cdistricts_elem&opacs=100%2C25%2C100%2C100%2C100

[7] California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). 2019, July. Scenic Highways: List of eligible and officially designated State Scenic Highways. https://dot.ca.gov/programs/design/lap-landscape-architecture-and-community-livability/lap-liv-i-scenic-highways

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 Section 65962.5 of the Government Code.

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 James Foster Elementary School site:

» GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board[8]
» EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)[9]
» EJScreen, US Environmental Protection Agency[10]
» EnviroMapper. US Environmental Protection Agency[11]
» Solid Waste Information System (SWIS). California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (CalRecycle)[12]

No hazardous materials sites are mapped at the school on any of the five databases. Hank Page Trucking at 27511 Catala Avenue, about 1,280 feet southeast of the school, is listed on the EnviroMapper website as a hazardous waste transporter. [13] The property is a house and is not developed with commercial or industrial uses.

The campus site appears undeveloped in several aerial photographs dated 1947 through 1977.[14] The project site does not contain hazardous materials and is not included on any of the searched hazardous materials sites databases. No impact would occur, and the hazardous waste sites exception does not apply to this project site.

Historical Sites: A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project which may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource.

The project site is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places,[15] California Historical Landmarks, or California Points of Historical Interest.[16] The site is not identified as a historical resource in the City of Santa Clarita General Plan.[17] Foster Elementary School opened in the late 1980s. The proposed project would not demolish any permanent structures, and the portables buildings to be removed were approved for removal in 2018. No historical resources

8 State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2020, August 20 (accessed). GeoTracker. http://geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov/
9 Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). 2020, August 20 (accessed). EnviroStor. http://www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/
10 US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). 2020, August 20 (accessed). EJScreen. https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/
11 US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). 2020, August 20 (accessed). EnviroMapper for EnviroFacts. https://enviro.epa.gov/enviro/em4ef.home
12 California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle). 2020, August 20 (accessed). Solid Waste Information System (SWIS), Facility/Site Listing, Los Angeles County. https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/SolidWaste/Site/Search.
13 USEPA. 2020, August 20 (accessed). FRA Facility Detail Report: Hank Page Trucking. https://ofmpub.epa.gov/frs_public2/fii_query_dtl.disp_program_facility.
14 Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC (NETR). 2018, May 3. Historic aerial photographs. Historicaerials.com.
15 National Park Service (NPS). 2020, August 20 (accessed). National Register of Historic Places, NPGallery Digital Asset Search. https://npgallery.nps.gov/nrhp
16 Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). 2020, August 2020 (accessed). California Historical Resources, Listed California Historical Resources, Los Angeles County. https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/ListedResources/?view=county&criteria=19
17 City of Santa Clarita. 2011, June. General Plan. Chapter 6: Conservation and Open Space Element. https://www.codepublishing.com/CA/SantaClarita/html/SantaClaritaGP/6%20-%20Conservation%20and%20Open%20Space%20Element.pdf.

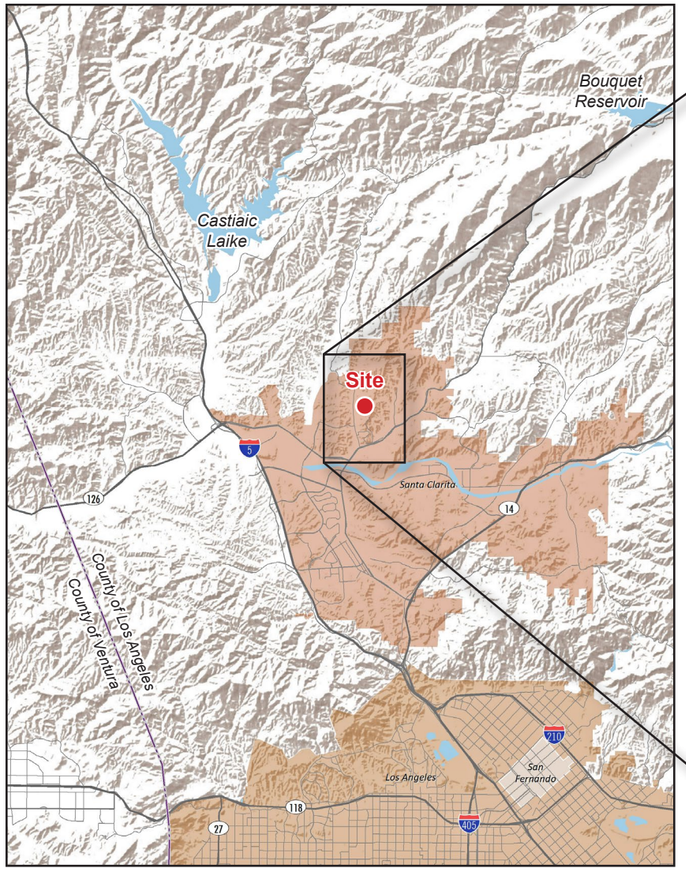
have been identified on-site during preparation of this Notice of Exemption, and the historical sites exception would not apply to the proposed project.

CONCLUSION

The proposed project at James Foster Elementary School is exempt from CEQA review pursuant to Section 15302. As discussed above, the exceptions pursuant to Section 15300.2 are inapplicable to the proposed project.

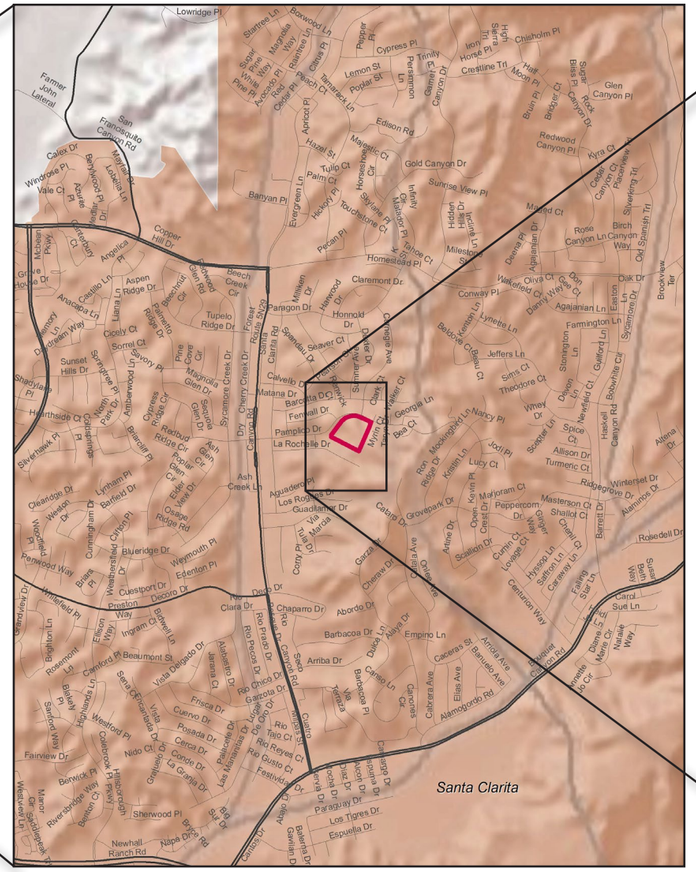
Figure 1 - Location and Aerial Photographs
1. Introduction

Regional Location



0 3
Scale (Miles)

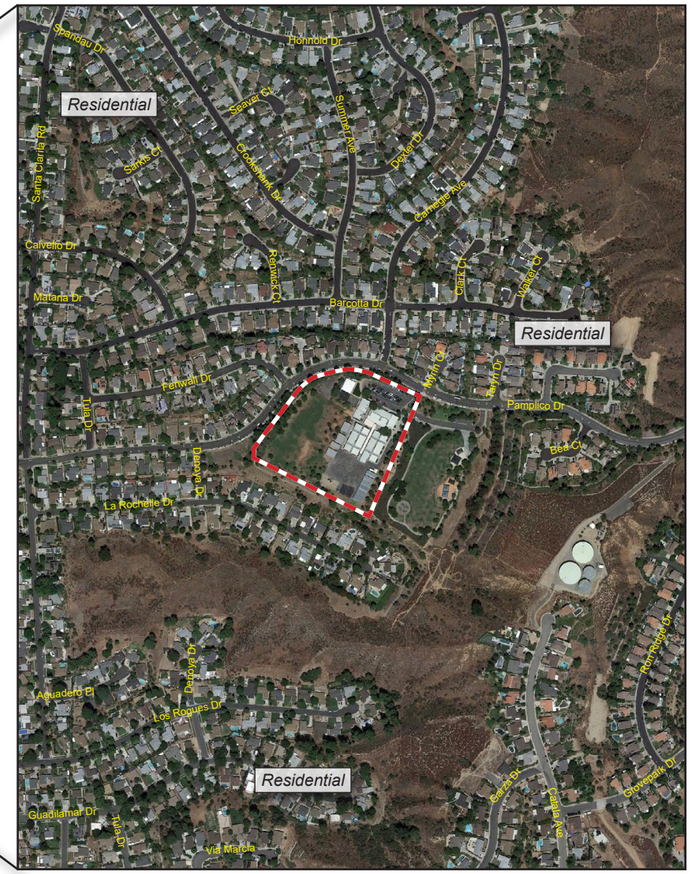
Local Vicinity



Project Boundary

0 2,000
Scale (Feet)

Aerial Photograph



Project Boundary

0 500
Scale (Feet)

Note: Unincorporated county areas are shown in white.

Source: ESRI, 2018; Google Earth Pro, 2019

Figure 2 - Site Plan
1. Introduction



Project Boundary

0 160
Scale (Feet)

Source: SGH Architects, 2020