

Merced Union High School District

Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Report

Merced High School Stadium Project

(State Clearinghouse No. 2019060008)

Comment Deadline: January 24, 2020

The Merced Union High School District has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Merced High School Stadium Project. Notice is hereby given that the Draft EIR is available for public review and comment.

Project Location and Description:

The Draft EIR evaluates a proposal by the Merced Union High School District to construct and operate a 3,100-seat high school football stadium on the north side of the existing Merced High School Campus located at the northwest corner of W. Olive Avenue and "G" Street in the City of Merced, Merced County, California.

Grandstands will be located on the north and south sides of the stadium, connected by concrete walkways around the perimeter of the football field to an entry gate structure located at the southeast corner of the stadium and to an existing concessions/restroom building on the east side of the stadium. The project includes the construction of walking paths connecting the stadium to existing parking on the southern portion of the high school campus. The grandstands will be completed in two phases with the first 2,000 seats on the south (home) side being completed in the initial phase, and an additional 1,100 seats on the north (visitor) side, as well as conversion from natural to artificial turf being completed in the second phase.

The project will utilize the existing lighting which has been in place since 2009. Project lighting will be upgraded to LED lighting with the second phase. The project will include a new Public Address (PA) system but will be comparable in wattage to the existing PA system. The project site has been used as an athletic field since 1986. Existing uses at the project site include varsity, junior varsity, and freshman football practice, freshman football games, annual homecoming varsity and junior varsity football games, and youth football league practice. Additional future uses include varsity and junior varsity football games, soccer practice, soccer games, and commencement ceremonies. Varsity and junior varsity football games are currently played at Golden Valley High School's Veteran's Stadium, soccer practice and games are currently held at the soccer fields located on the southeast corner of the Merced High School campus, and commencement ceremonies are currently held at Merced College's Stadium 76 - Don Odishoo Field. The project will not be used by other high schools.

Potential Project Impacts:

Based on the Draft EIR, the project could have significant environmental effects related to biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. The Draft EIR, however, found that each of the potentially significant impacts could be reduced to insignificance by mitigation measures presented in the Draft EIR, except for noise. Operation of the stadium would result in noise levels that exceed City of Merced standards at residences north of the stadium.

Public Review:

The 45-day public review period for the Draft EIR will begin on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 and end on Friday, January 24, 2020. Please submit written comments to Ted Walstrom, Director of Facilities & Planning, Merced Union High School District, P.O. Box 2147, Merced, CA, 95344, email: twalstrom@muhsd.org. All comments addressing environmental issues will be responded to in the Final EIR.

Copies of the Draft EIR are available for review at the following locations:

Merced Union High School District
Administrative Office
3430 A Street
Atwater, CA 95301

Merced County Library
2100 "O" Street
Merced, CA 95340

The Draft EIR is also available for download at: <https://www.muhsd.org/human-resources/facilities>

Board of Trustees Meeting:

The Merced High School District School Board of Trustees will meet to consider certification of the Final EIR and approval of the project on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. (or as soon thereafter as possible) at the Merced High School Library, 205 W. Olive Avenue, Merced, CA. All interested persons are welcome to attend the meeting and present testimony.