

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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

From: Sweetwater Union High School District
1130 Fifth Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91911

☒ County Clerk, San Diego
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 260
San Diego, CA 92112

Eastlake High School Title IX Softball Facility and Track & Field Replacement Projects
Project Title

Eastlake High School (1120 Eastlake Parkway)
Project Location – Specific

Chula Vista
Project Location – City

San Diego
Project Location – County

Sweetwater Union High School District proposes to modernize Eastlake High School's softball facility, track and field, and paths of travel to both fields. The proposed project would bring the school's outdoor recreational amenities up to current State and District standards, gain compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, and benefit students and the surrounding community.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project

Sweetwater Union High School District
Name of Public Agency Approving Project

Sweetwater Union High School District
Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project

Exempt Status:

☐ Ministerial

☐ Declared Emergency

☐ Emergency Project

☒ Categorical Exemption: §§ 15301 (Class 1, Existing Facilities), 15302 (Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction), 15303 (Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures), 15304 (Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land), 15311 (Class 11, Accessory Structures), and 15314 (Class 14, Minor Additions to Schools)

☐ Statutory Exemptions.

CEQA: California Environmental Quality Act

The proposed improvements are not disqualified from the categorical exemption by any of the exceptions listed under CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2.

Reasons why project is exempt

Janea Quirk, Director Facilities & Operations,
Planning & Construction

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Lead Agency 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

Signature:



Date:

12.16.2020

Title:

DIRECTOR, PLANNING & CONSTRUCTION.

☒ Signed by Lead Agency

☒ Signed by Applicant

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

Date Received for

Filing at OPR: _____

APPLICABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION

Eastlake High School Title IX Softball Facility and Track & Field Replacement Projects

Sweetwater Union High School District (District) proposes to modernize Eastlake High School's track and field, softball facility, and paths of travel to these amenities (proposed project). This document assesses whether the proposed project can be exempted from expanded environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), under California Public Resources Code Section 21084 and CEQA Guidelines Sections 15061(b)(2) and 15300 et seq. (California Code of Regulations Title 14).

1. Location

The proposed project would be implemented at Eastlake High School (EHS), 1120 Eastlake Parkway in the City of Chula Vista, County of San Diego, Assessor's Parcel Number 5953201700. Figure 1, *Local Vicinity*, shows the aerial view of the high school campus and surrounding uses.

2. Existing Setting

The campus was constructed in 1992. Eastlake Parkway is adjacent to the campus on the east, State Route 125 (South Bay Expressway) is on the west, Chula Vista Community Park is on the north, and an electric transmission powerline easement is on the south. Residential uses are farther east and south, and Olympic View Elementary School is southeast of EHS.

The track and field—in the football stadium—and the softball field are along the western portion of EHS. Both facilities are below the grade of the school buildings and are separated from the school buildings by retaining walls and a fire access road. The stadium is in a north-south orientation and is separated from the softball field by a slope with ornamental vegetation. The track and field consist of rubber and synthetic turf, respectively, and the softball field consists of natural turf.

Paths of travel exist throughout the campus, including from Eastlake Parkway to the school building area and sports fields. However, some do not meet accessibility requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or have been damaged by tree roots. Figure 2, *Photographs: Track and Field*, and Figure 3, *Photographs: Softball Field*, show the environmental setting and conditions at the EHS stadium and softball facility.

3. Proposed Project

Project Objectives

The objectives for the proposed project are to:

- » Replace and restore the track and field, which is nearing the end of its useful life.
- » Upgrade the softball field to gain compliance with ADA and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act.
- » Restore paths of travel from the public right-of-way on Eastlake Parkway to the track and field and softball field, in compliance with ADA.

Project Characteristics

Proposed Improvements

The proposed improvements would improve the track and field, softball field, and paths of travel to the fields. The improvements would not directly affect the existing bleacher seats, sound systems, or field lighting systems at either the track and field or softball field. Figure 4, *Site Plan: Track and Field*, and Figure 5, *Site Plan: Softball Field*, illustrate the proposed improvements at the track and field and softball field. Figure 6, *Proposed Paths of Travel*, shows the paths where ADA accessible improvements would be made.

Track and Field Replacement

- » Replace synthetic turf and rubberized track surface. Permanently mark the field for existing sport uses: football, soccer, lacrosse, and field hockey.
- » Repair and replace existing piping for the field irrigation system.
- » Extend and improve paths of travel in compliance with ADA from Eastlake Parkway via the school building area and from the ADA parking spaces in the northeast parking lot to the stadium and stadium visitor bleachers. Two trees with roots buckling the walkway north of the visitor bleachers would be removed.
- » Upgrade stadium restroom to meet ADA requirements; power wash and paint exterior doors, louvers, and frames.

Title IX Softball Facility Upgrades

- » Replace existing varsity field backstop, home and visitor dugouts, and team room. The team room building would include a locker area, office, and storage. Two trees between the team room building and batting cage would be removed.
- » Construct new storage building, approximately 700 SF, behind the right field.
- » Construct new, tiered-level dry concession and ticket booth building of approximately 350 SF. A tree adjacent to the new building would be removed. The concession facility would serve the softball field, and the ticket booth would serve the softball field and home team of the football stadium; the existing wooden, home team ticket booth would be removed. As a bid alternate, the wooden visitor ticket booth northeast of the stadium plaza, near the tennis courts would be replaced with a similar permanent structure.
- » Install DSA pre-check shade structures over the home and visitor bleachers.
- » Replace discus circle and safety fence; install a retaining wall behind the discus fence in the sloped area.
- » Repair existing batting cage, including upgrades to the lighting system.
- » Replace practice field backstop.
- » Modernize ground-level library restroom to accommodate the softball facility operations (install exterior entry) and meet ADA accessibility requirements.
- » Improve the paths of travel from Eastlake Parkway to the softball field via the main school building area and library restroom.

Construction

The District plans to submit project plans to the Division of the State Architect (DSA) in fall 2020, bid the project in spring 2021, and start a six-month construction program in summer 2021. Construction staging would be in the northwest portion of the softball field.

Operations

The proposed project would not expand operations of the track and field and softball field, the EHS curriculum and program, or community use¹ of the field facilities either during the interim construction period or on a permanent basis. Existing uses and programs would continue to operate on the campus during and after construction activities. Construction would be conducted in a manner that would allow continued use of portions of the fields at any time, in order to minimize disruption of campus operations. Existing uses would not be relocated to off-site facilities during construction.

¹ Sections 38130 et seq. of the California Education Code, known as the Civic Center Act, state that every public school in the state must make available a “civic center” for community use.

4. Applicability of Categorical Exemption

The CEQA Guidelines lists classes of projects that have been determined not to have a significant effect on the environment and can be categorically exempt from the provisions of CEQA if certain exceptions do not apply (see Section 5). The proposed improvements fall under classes 1, 2, 3, 4, 11, and 14.

Class 1, Existing Facilities

Class 1, Existing Facilities, 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 existing or former use. The key consideration is whether the project involves negligible or no expansion of use. (CEQA Guidelines § 15301)

The proposed project includes repairs and maintenance to the existing track and field, softball field, stadium and library restroom facilities, discus throw, and paths of travel. The improvements would upgrade these amenities to current state codes, including state Title IX, ADA requirements, and District standards. The improvements would not result in the expansion of their existing uses or school operations.

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction

Class 2, Replacement or Reconstruction, 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. (CEQA Guidelines § 15302)

The proposed improvements involve replacing and reconstructing the existing track and field; softball field varsity and practice backstops, dugouts, and team room; discus throw; stadium home and visitor ticket booths; and paths of travel. These improvements would have the same purpose and capacity as the structures replaced.

Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures

Class 3, New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures, consists of 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. (CEQA Guidelines § 15303)

The proposed project includes new construction of a storage building, a concession stand/ticket booth building, and shade structures that would accommodate the existing softball field and stadium operations.

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land

Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land, consists of minor public or private alterations in the condition of land, water, and/or vegetation which do not involve removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees except for forestry or agricultural purposes. (CEQA Guidelines § 15304)

The proposed project would alter developed areas of the EHS campus and require minor land modifications, including grading, trenching, backfilling, and landscaping. Vegetation in the way of the paths of travel and/or building improvements would be removed. Trees proposed for removal are mature; however, they are not scenic. All disturbed

areas would be restored, and areas with removed trees would be improved with concrete walkways, hardscape, and/or landscaped with ground-covering plants, as needed.

Class 11, Accessory Structures

Class 11, Accessory Structures, consists of construction, or placement of minor structures accessory to (appurtenant to) existing commercial, industrial, or institutional facilities, including but not limited to: (a) on-premise signs. (CEQA Guidelines § 15311)

The proposed project includes new construction of a storage building, concession stand and ticket booth building, shade structures over the home and visitor varsity softball field bleachers, as well as the replacement and/or reconstruction of existing accessory structures that complement the existing softball field and track and field operations.

Class 14, Minor Additions to School

Class 14, Minor Additions to School, consists of minor additions to existing schools within existing school grounds where the addition does not increase original student capacity by more than 25 percent or ten classrooms, whichever is less. The addition of portable classrooms is included in this exemption. (CEQA Guidelines § 15314)

The proposed project would be implemented at an existing high school. It will not affect the school's student capacity or classroom count.

5. Exceptions to Categorical Exemptions

Section 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines lists conditions under which categorical exemptions are inapplicable. The proposed project is reviewed below for characteristics or circumstances that might invalidate the potential to exempt the proposed project from further environmental evaluation.

a. Location

Section 15300.2(a) of the CEQA Guidelines states that classes 3, 4, 5, 6, and 11 are qualified by consideration of whether the project is in a uniquely sensitive environment, such that it impacts an environmental resource of hazardous or critical concern that has been designated, precisely mapped, and officially adopted pursuant to law by federal, state, or local agencies.

The USFWS National Wetlands Inventory maps an east-west intermittent riverine in the southern end of the EHS campus (see Figure 1). Observations made during a site visit conducted by PlaceWorks on August 13, 2020, confirm the areas with the mapped riverine are paved and developed with school facilities and ornamental vegetation. No exposed waterways, streams, channels, wetlands, sensitive habitats, or hazards were observed, and the mapped riverine was not present. Additionally, because the proposed improvements would be implemented in developed areas (track and field, softball field, and designated paths of travel) that are outside the footprint of the mapped riverine, the proposed project would not have the potential to disturb any sensitive riverine habitat. EHS is also listed on the CalEPA Regulated Site Portal as a hazardous waste generator and chemical storage facility. However, as discussed in Section 5e, below, implementation of the proposed improvements would not expose or exacerbate any potentially existing hazardous conditions at the school. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

b. Cumulative Impact

Exemptions are inapplicable when there is a significant cumulative impact of “successive projects of the same type in the same place, over time” (§ 15300.2(b)). In addition to the proposed improvements, the District is planning two other projects on the EHS campus:

- Proposed New 24-Classroom Building. This project involves the construction of a 45,000-SF, multistory building with 24 classrooms between the school gymnasium and theater, near the front of the school. The project also includes the removal of 13 portable classroom buildings.
- Future Library Rehabilitation and Reconfiguration. This project involves consolidating library functions in the northern half of the existing library building and modernizing the southern half to accommodate two sports medicine classrooms, an after-hours treatment room, and two special education classrooms with an adjoining hygiene room, life skills room, and sensory space.

Construction of these related projects would start in the summer of 2024, after the completion of the proposed improvements described herein. Therefore, the construction activities of the related projects would not overlap with those of the proposed project, and no cumulatively considerable environmental effects would 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. The determination whether this exception applies involves two distinct questions: (1) whether the project presents unusual circumstances, and (2) whether there is a reasonable possibility that a significant environmental impact will result from the unusual circumstances. The lead agency is required to consider the second question only if it finds that some circumstance of the project is unusual. *Berkeley Hillside Preservation v City of Berkeley* (2015) 60 C4th 1086, 1104.

- » The project site has operated as a high school campus since 1992. Prior to 1992, it was undeveloped land. The surrounding, park, residential, and commercial developments were constructed at around and after the high school’s development.
- » The project site is entirely developed with school amenities, and all improvements would be implemented on disturbed areas of the campus.
- » The proposed modernization improvements are standard and typical for existing high school campuses.
- » The proposed design and construction will comply with current state building and structural codes and will be plan-checked and inspected by the Division of the State Architect.
- » The construction contractor will implement best management practices to minimize and limit potential impact to water quality and air emissions standards. The contractor will comply with all federal, State, and local requirements.
- » The proposed improvements would not change the existing uses of the softball field and track and field, and postconstruction, school and field operations would resume as they were prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The proposed project presents no unusual circumstances or special environmental constraints that might have a reasonable possibility to create significant environmental impact. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

d. Scenic Highways

A categorical exemption shall not be used for a project that may damage scenic resources—including but not limited to trees, historic buildings, rock outcroppings, or similar resources—within an officially designated state scenic highway. The closest officially designated scenic highway is State Route 75, approximately 10 miles west of EHS. Due to the distance, project implementation would not have the ability to devalue the highway. This exception does not apply to the project.

e. Hazardous Waste Sites

Section 15300.2 of the CEQA Guidelines states that a categorical exemption shall not be used for a project on a site that is on any list compiled pursuant to Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. Section 65962.5 specifies lists of hazardous materials sites—hazardous waste facilities; 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 potential hazardous materials on EHS:

1. GeoTracker. State Water Resources Control Board,
2. EnviroStor. Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC),
3. EJScreen and EnviroMapper. US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA),
4. Solid Waste Information System (SWIS).
5. California Department of Resources Recovery and Recycling (Cal Recycle),
6. CalEPA Regulated Site Portal. California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA).

The project site is not listed on GeoTracker, EnviroStor, EJScreen, EnviroMapper, SWIS, or CalRecycle. The site is, however, listed on CalEPA Regulated Site Portal as a hazardous waste generator and chemical storage facility.

- Twelve violations were reported between the years 2015 and 2019. The most recent violations were on June 3, 2019, and include citations for failure to complete and submit a hazardous material inventory, failure to provide initial and annual training to all employees, and failure to properly identify hazardous material. EHS is noted as coming into compliance on June 19, 2019. The list of chemicals stored at EHS are recorded as sharps, laboratory waste chemicals, photo chemicals, and diesel.
- The 1120 Eastlake Parkway address is also identified as AT&T Mobility – Eastlake, which is a radiotelephone communications facility. It is listed as a chemical storage facility of lead acid batteries. No violations are listed for this facility on the database.

Listing as a Hazardous Waste Generator and/or Chemical Storage Facility does not indicate that an environmental concern exists, only that the address is a regulated site with oversight by an agency. No spills or releases were identified. Additionally, AT&T cell towers and equipment are located on the roof of the EHS Theater Building, away from the proposed improvements. Although EHS is on a list compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5, the proposed project would not create hazards related to the disturbance of or exposure of the environment and EHS occupants to a hazardous waste site. Therefore, this exception does not apply to the proposed project.

f. Historic Resources

A categorical exemption cannot be used for a project that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource, as specified in Public Resources Code Section 21084.1. Built in 1992, EHS is a relatively young facility and is not listed on any national, state, or local historic registers. Additionally, the proposed project would not physically alter any of the existing school buildings. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource, and this exception does not apply to the project.

6. Conclusion

As documented herein, the proposed project does not meet the conditions in Section 15300.2, Exceptions, of the CEQA Guidelines, and the proposed project at EHS can be exempt from further environmental review in accordance with the provisions of CEQA.

7. References

- ArcGIS. California Department of Transportation. 2019. California State Scenic Highway System Map. Accessed 3 September 2020.
<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=2e921695c43643b1aaf7000dfcc19983>
- California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (Cal Recycle). 2020. SWIS Facility/Site Search. Accessed 2 September 2020. <https://www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/swfacilities/Directory/19-DE-0004/Index>
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2020.
- California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA). 2020. CalEPA Regulated Site Portal. Accessed 2 September 2, 2020. <https://siteportal.calepa.ca.gov/nsite/map/help>
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- Historic Resources Survey, Chula Vista, California. 2012, November. ASM Affiliates, Inc.
<https://www.chulavistaca.gov/home/showdocument?id=288>
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<https://www3.epa.gov/enviro/index.html>
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- US National Park Service (NPS). 2020. National Historic Landmarks. Accessed 3 September 2020.
<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/list-of-nhls-by-state.htm>

Figure 1 - Local Vicinity



Figure 2 - Photographs, Track and Field



Photo 1. View of the EHS track and field from the northeast corner of the football stadium.

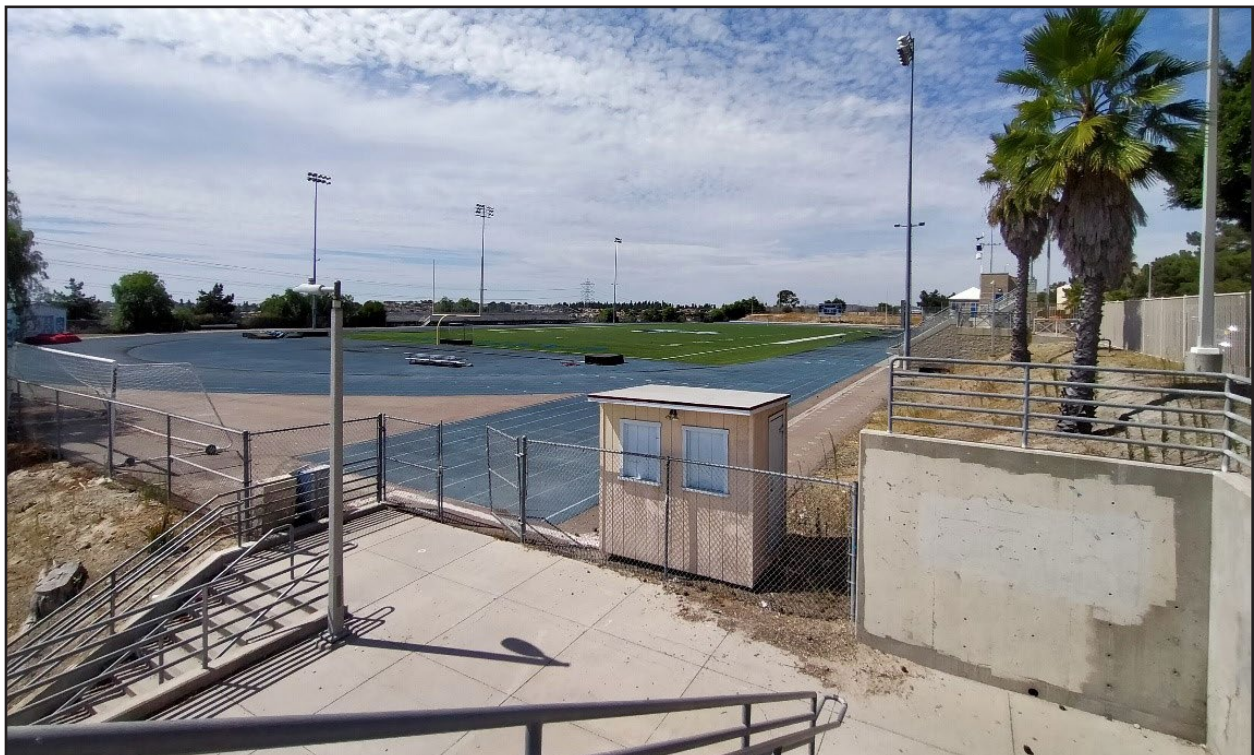


Photo 2. View of the EHS track and field near the southeast corner of the football stadium. Note the slope between the track and field and a fire access lane (not shown), east of the fence on the right side of the photograph.

Figure 3 - Photographs, Softball Field



Photo 3. View of the EHS softball field. Note the ticket booth behind the backstop. Also note the pedestrian ramp in the foreground and the slope on the right side of the photograph.



Photo 4. View of the EHS batting cage. Note the grade separation between the fire lane on the left of the photograph and batting cage.

Figure 4 - Site Plan, Track and Field



[illegible]

SITE PLAN LEGEND

- (B) BUILDING, N.I.C.
- AREA OF WORK
- PROPERTY LINE
- ASSUMED PROPERTY LINE
- EXISTING ACCESSIBLE PATH OF TRAVEL PER A.B.
- NEW ACCESSIBLE PATH OF TRAVEL
- DENOTES SAFE DISPERSAL AREA PER C.B.C. SECTION 102.8
- CHAIN LINK FENCE
- RESTROOM FACILITY
 - B=BOYS M=MALE
 - G=GRLS W=WOMEN
 - D.F.=DRINKING FOUNTAIN
 - S=STAFF P=PARKING
 - A=ALL GENDER
- CONCRETE PAVING
- LANDSCAPE
- ASPHALT CONCRETE PAVING
- PANIC HARDWARE
- PATH OF TRAVEL
- AREAS LIKELY TO BE REPLACED

0 75
Scale (Feet)