

21 2019 231

Notice of Determination

Appendix D

To:

[X] Office of Planning and Research
U.S. Mail: P.O. Box 3044
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044
Street Address: 1400 Tenth St., Rm 113
Sacramento, CA 95814

[X] County Clerk

County of: Marin
Address: 3501 Civic Center Drive, #234
San Rafael, CA 94903

From:

Public Agency: Novato Unified School District
Address: 1015 7th Street
Novato, CA 94945-2205
Contact: Michael Woolard, Facilities Director
Phone: (415) 493-4588

Lead Agency (if different from above):

Address:

Contact:

Phone:

SUBJECT: Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code.

State Clearinghouse Number (if submitted to State Clearinghouse): 2019029026

Project Title: San Marin High School STEM and PAC Projects - Tree Removal Addendum

Project Applicant: Novato Unified School District

Project Location (include county): 15 San Marin Drive, Novato, Marin County

FILED

OCT 02 2019

SHELLY SCOTT
MARIN COUNTY CLERK
BY: J. MANNION Deputy

Project Description:

The project would consist of a new science and technology (STEM) Building and Performing Arts Center. The project was originally approved in April 2019, but it was subsequently determined that several large trees needed to be removed. An Addendum to the IS was prepared to address that project modification. This NOD addresses the modified project with tree removal.

This is to advise that the Novato Unified School District has approved the above (X) Lead Agency or () Responsible Agency

described project on October 1, 2019 and has made the following determinations regarding the above described project.

- 1. The project [] will [X] will not have a significant effect on the environment.
2. [] An Environmental Impact Report was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA. [X] A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures [X] were [] were not made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation reporting or monitoring plan [X] was [] was not adopted for this project.
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations [] was [X] was not adopted for this project.
6. Findings [] were [X] were not made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.

This is to certify that the final EIR with comments and responses and record of project approval, or the negative Declaration, is available to the General Public at:

NUSD Offices, 1015 7th Street, Novato CA

Signature (Public Agency): M.Z. Woolard Title: Facilities Manager

Date: October 2, 2019 Date Received for filing at OPR:

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Authority cited: Sections 21083, Public Resources Code. Reference Section 21000-21174, Public Resources Code.

OCT 04 2019

Revised 2011

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

POSTED 10/2/19 TO 11/2/19.

**ADDENDUM TO INITIAL STUDY/
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
(SCH No. 2019029026)**

**NOVATO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, SAN MARIN UNION HIGH SCHOOL STEM
AND PAC PROJECTS**

October 1, 2019

Prepared For:
Novato Unified School District
1015 Seventh Street
Novato, CA 94945-2205

Prepared by:
Grassetti Environmental Consulting
7008 Bristol Drive
Berkeley, CA 94705

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This environmental document is an Addendum to the Novato Unified School District (NUSD or District), STEM and Performing Arts Center (PAC) Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), State Clearinghouse No. 2019029026, adopted in April 2018 by the NUSD. The NUSD is the lead agency under CEQA.

While there are no changes to the proposed buildings, removal of two heritage trees (adjacent to the proposed new STEM Building) has been determined to be required by the project arborist. This tree removal was not addressed in the IS/MND for the proposed project, and therefore is the subject of this Addendum. As demonstrated in this Addendum, the IS/MND continues to adequately address the environmental impacts of the improvements, pursuant to California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

1.2 BACKGROUND

The IS/MND was prepared to address construction-level and operational impacts of the proposed new STEM and PAC buildings (Approved Project). The IS/MND evaluated potential environmental effects on aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities and service systems, and mandatory findings of significance. All impacts identified in the IS/MND were either less than significant or have been mitigated to below a level of significance through implementation of mitigation measures identified in the document and subsequently incorporated into the project by the District.

1.3 PURPOSE OF ADDENDUM TO THE IS/MND

When a proposed project is changed, there are changes in environmental setting, or additional analysis is required, a determination must be made by the Lead Agency as to whether an Addendum or Subsequent EIR or MND is prepared. CEQA Guidelines Sections 15162 and 15164 set forth criteria to assess which environmental document is appropriate. The criteria for determining whether an Addendum or Subsequent MND is prepared are outlined below. If the criteria below are true, then an Addendum is the appropriate document:

- No new significant impacts will result from the project or from new mitigation measures.

- No substantial increase in the severity of environmental impact will occur.
- No new feasible alternatives or mitigation measures that would reduce impacts previously found not to be feasible have, in fact, been found to be feasible.

Based upon the information provided in Section 3.0 of this document, the changes to the Approved Project (tree removal and pruning) will not result in new significant impacts or substantially increase the severity of impacts previously identified in the IS/MND, and there are no previously infeasible alternatives that are now feasible. None of the other factors set forth in Section 15162(a)(3) are present. Therefore, an Addendum is appropriate. This Addendum addresses the environmental effects of the refinements to the project.

2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1. PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

San Marin High School is located in the San Marin neighborhood in the northwestern area of the City of Novato, in Marin County. Regionally, the campus is accessed from US Highway 101, via Atherton Avenue, Novato Boulevard, and San Marin Drive.

The proposed new buildings would replace existing buildings on the southwest portion of the school campus. The proposed STEM building and associated improvements would be constructed just south of the Maker Space building and southeast of the tennis courts. There are currently five portable classrooms with almost 1,000 square feet per classroom (approximately 4,906 square feet total), 23,000 square feet of landscaped area, and 12,000 square feet of pavement at this location. The site is nearly level.

The San Marin High School campus is bounded on the north by single-family residences in the San Marin neighborhood and the Kaiser Permanente Novato Medical Offices, on the south by Novato Boulevard and Morning Star Farm, a horse boarding and training facility; on the east by All Saints Church, single-family residences, and San Ramon Elementary School; and on the west by single-family residences and open space. The STEM tree removal site faces Novato Boulevard, and is directly across the street from the Morning Star Farm facilities.

2.2. PREVIOUSLY APPROVED PROJECT

The previously approved project included a new science and technology (STEM) building and a new Performing Arts Center (PAC) building, replacing existing buildings, tennis courts, and landscaped areas on the sites. Under that project, the trees currently proposed for removal would be retained.

2.3. PROPOSED PROJECT

The currently proposed project would be similar to the previously approved project with the following exceptions:

- Two large bay trees would be removed
- One large oak tree would be pruned (one large branch would be removed)

The trees proposed for removal and pruning are shown on Figure 1. No alterations are proposed for the new buildings or ancillary facilities. The tree removal is required because an arborist has determined that the bay trees are suffering from root fungus, are hollow, and unsafe (See Appendix A). In addition, one large branch from a Heritage Valley Oak tree is proposed for removal to facilitate construction of the STEM building. The remainder of that tree would be safely pruned and retained.

branch removal.

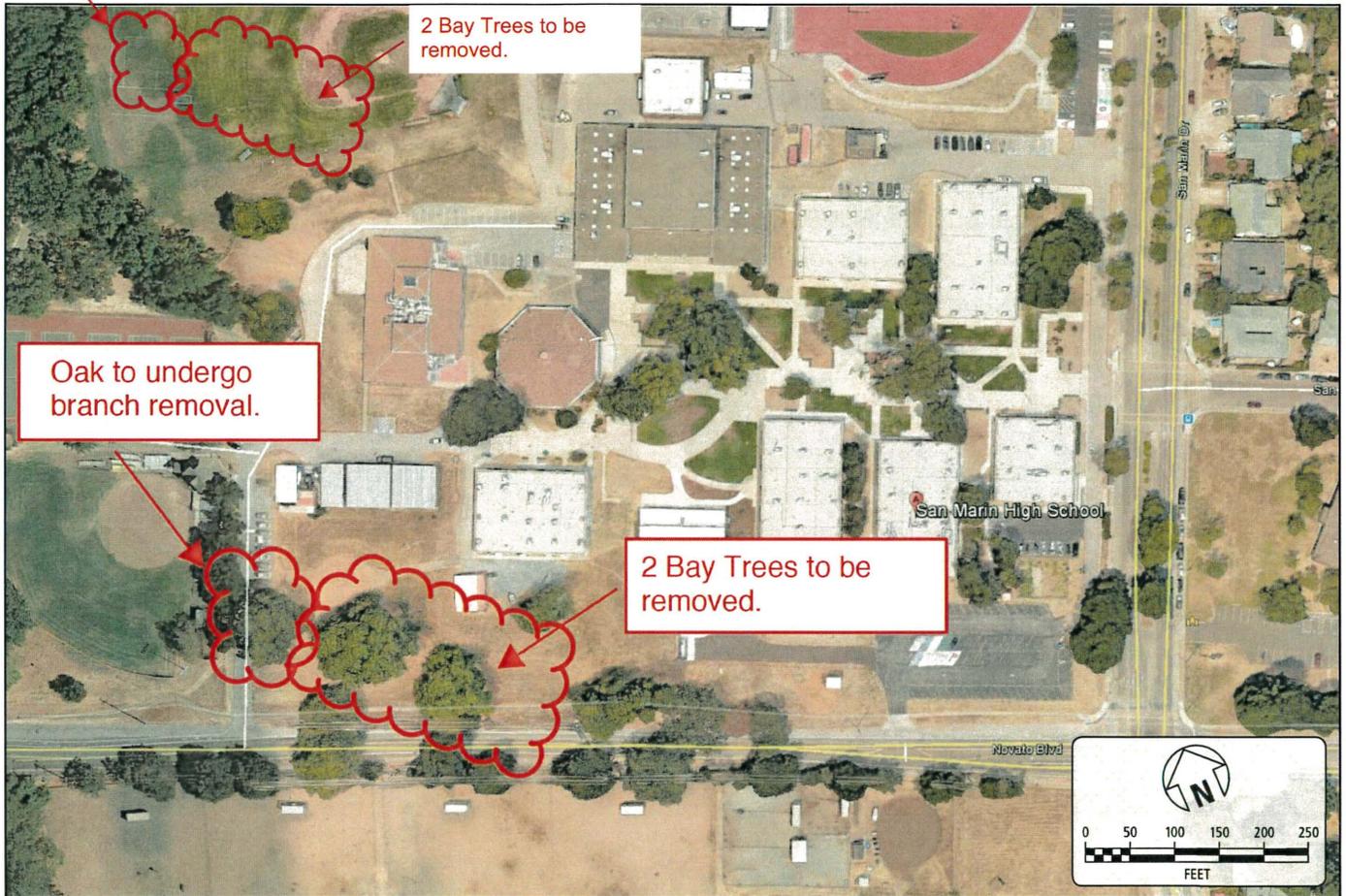


Figure 1
Trees Proposed for Removal and Pruning

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

As explained in Section 1.0, this Addendum has been undertaken pursuant to the provisions of CEQA Sections 15162 and 15164 to provide the District with the factual basis for determining whether any changes in the project, any changes in circumstances, or any new information since the IS/MND was certified require additional environmental review or preparation of a Subsequent MND or EIR to the IS/MND previously prepared.

The environmental analysis provided in the IS/MND remains current and applicable to the proposed project in all areas, as summarized below.

Environmental Topics

Aesthetics – The trees proposed for removal and pruning are visible from Novato Boulevard as well as from the school grounds (see Initial Study Figure 6: View of the STEM Building site for a view including the trees). Views from passing vehicles and pedestrians along Novato Blvd. would be degraded by the loss of the mature trees. However, several mature native trees (oaks and bays) would still be visible nearby, and a number of additional mature native trees would still be visible on the opposite side of Novato Blvd., adjacent to Morning Star Farms (See Initial Study Figure 9: Proposed Stem Building site looking southwest across Novato Boulevard).

Views from within the school would not be significantly affected because school buildings and recreation areas do not have substantial views of these trees. The grassy landscaped area would be retained in all of these views; views of this area would be altered from grass with large trees to mainly grass areas. Views from the Morning Star farms facilities would not be substantially affected because there are numerous mature trees on that side of Novato Blvd., adjacent to the farm.

Therefore, while there would be an increased visual impact of the project as viewed from Novato Boulevard from the proposed tree removal, the impact would remain less than significant, as described in the IS/MND.

Agriculture and Forestry Resources – No change. The two trees to be removed are not considered forestry resources and have minimal economic value.

Air Quality – Minimal increase in overall construction impacts from tree removal activities.

Biological Resources – Potential impacts of tree removal are addressed in item e) in the biological resources section of the Initial Study.

The City of Novato Tree Permit Informational Handout defines a “Heritage Tree” as any tree that has a trunk with a diameter of 24 inches or more (75 inches in circumference). Although the NUSD is exempt from the City’s Tree Permit requirements, its content can be used as an indicator of impact significance. The two trees proposed for removal and the tree proposed for

pruning all meet the Heritage Tree definition. The City Tree Permit process allows pruning and removal of trees that are in poor health and/or pose a safety hazard. The arborist's report (See Appendix A) proposes tree removal due to hazards associated with poor health of the trees.

Although no tree removal was originally proposed as part of the project, the IS/MND addressed the possibility that some trees may need to be removed if damaged from construction, or for other reasons. The potential biological impacts of the tree removal is the same regardless of the cause of the removal.

The IS/MND identified potential impacts to nesting birds as a significant but mitigable impact from potential tree removal. In order to reduce that impact to a less-than-significant level, the IS/MND included Mitigation Measure BIO-1, which reads as follows:

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Wherever possible, tree removal should occur during the period of September 1 to January 31, which is outside of the nesting season. If construction activities and/or tree removal would commence anytime during the nesting/breeding season of native bird species potentially nesting near the site (typically February through August in the Project region), a pre-construction survey for nesting birds shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within two weeks of the commencement of construction activities. If construction during the nesting season ceases for more than ten days or moves to a new locale on the site, nesting bird surveys shall be conducted prior to the restart of work.

If active nests are found in areas that could be directly affected or are within 200 feet of construction and would be subject to prolonged construction-related noise, a no-disturbance 50-foot buffer zone shall be created around active nests during the breeding season or until a qualified biologist determines that all young have fledged.

Removal of these trees is proposed to occur before January 31, therefore this impact would not be significant. Further, as described in the IS/MND, implementation of this measure would assure that the impact remains less than significant with mitigation, if tree removal activities were to occur during the nesting season. Finally, removal of these trees would be permitted under the City of Novato's Tree Permit Ordinance. Therefore no new significant biological resources impact would occur.

Cultural Resources – No change – same project footprint.

Geology and Soils – No change- same mitigable hazards.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions – No change – minimally more construction.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials – The proposed tree removal would remove a potential hazard posed by falling limbs or toppling of the rotted trees. No new adverse impacts would occur.

Hydrology and Water Quality – The removal of two trees and pruning of a third tree would not affect runoff, flooding, or water quality.

Land Use and Planning – Same land uses and intensity as described in the IS/MND.

Mineral Resources – No change from the IS/MND.

Noise – There would be a minor increase in noise from chainsaws in the week or less during which the tree removal would occur. Use of chain saws would occur only during hours specified by the City of Novato Noise Ordinance.

Population and Housing – no change- no effects.

Public Services – No change – same service requirements.

Recreation – No change- no effects.

Transportation/Traffic – Minimal change- same school capacity and staff would result in no change in traffic generation. Minor increase in traffic during removal of trees. No roadway closures or detours are anticipated for this work.

Utilities and Service Systems – No change.

Mandatory Findings of Significance – No change.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the information provided above, the newly evaluated impacts of the minor revisions to the project description would not result in a measurable increase in new environmental impacts. The conclusions of this Addendum remain consistent with those made in the IS/MND. No new significant impacts have been identified, nor is the severity of newly identified impacts substantially greater than the conclusions of the IS/MND.

Based upon the evidence included in the above analysis, implementation of the proposed project as described in the IS/MND, as modified in Section 2.2, above, would not result in a substantial change in the conclusions and analysis included in the IS/MND, and no additional CEQA review is required.

APPENDIX A: ARBORIST'S REPORT



JERRY'S TREE SERVICE

P.O. Box 7245
Petaluma, CA 94955-7245

ESTIMATE	#620
ESTIMATE DATE	Aug 29, 2019
SCHEDULED DATE	Thu Aug 22, 2019 12:00pm
TOTAL	\$39,000.00

Mike Woolard ** San Marin High School**
San Marin High School
15 San Marin Dr
Novato, CA 94945

CONTACT US

(707) 778-8264
jerrystrees@comcast.net

(703) 505-5778
mwoolard@nusd.org

ESTIMATE

Services	amount
REMOVE 2 HAZARDOUS BAY TREES:	\$36,000.00
Investigation of Bay Trees: Trees are hollow and unsafe, root fungus conks at base of tree, protrudes 20' high, indication trunk hollow or rotten. After diagnosing the trunk there is no sound wood. Large dye back indication of root rot/trunk rot. If safety pruned or radically pruned this would speed up the die off. Recommending: Remove bay trees.	
Remove 2 large bay trees on Novato Blvd. side of school. Remove trees down to 6' trunks, if completely hollow will remove to ground level.	
Heritage Valley Oak:	\$3,000.00
Remove large low branch on Oak tree next to future STEM building and safety prune remainder of tree.	
Haul all wood brush and debris	
Subtotal	\$39,000.00
Total	\$39,000.00

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS, JERRY KALFOS
ISA CERTIFIED ARBORIST ID# WE-12446A