

Hilmar Unified School District
Notice of Intent to Adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the
New Hilmar Unified Elementary School Project
(State Clearinghouse No. 2019110288)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN:

In accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act, Hilmar Unified School District (“District”) has prepared an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed New Hilmar Unified Elementary School Project (“project”). Based on the Initial Study, the District has determined that although the project could have a significant effect on the environment, there would not be a significant effect because the District has incorporated into the project mitigation measures that would either avoid any significant effects of the project or reduce the effects to a less than significant level.

The Board of Trustees of Hilmar Unified School District will consider adopting the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and approving the project on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 7:00 p.m., or as soon thereafter as possible in the District Office Board Room, 7807 N. Lander Avenue, Hilmar, California. _All interested persons are invited to attend this meeting and present testimony regarding the project.

Project Location and Description: The New Hilmar Unified Elementary School Project (“project”) includes construction and operation of a new elementary school and reconfiguration of the existing Elim Elementary School campus. The project site is located on approximately 15.5 acres at the northwest corner of Geer Avenue and Pearl Street in the community of Hilmar, Merced County, CA. The site encompasses a grass-turfed area currently being used by Hilmar High School, as well as a portion of the existing Elim Elementary School site.

The new elementary school campus will provide instruction for TK through 2nd grades and will serve approximately 600 students. Buildout of the new campus will include six classroom buildings housing 25 classrooms; one building housing a library and administrative office; a multipurpose building with an outdoor amphitheater area; and recreational areas including hardcourts, play structures, and turfed play areas. At the Elim Elementary campus, the “front” of Elim will be reoriented from facing Lander Avenue (State Route 165) to facing a new interior access area, where a new administration building will be constructed for the Elim campus. New driveways from Geer Avenue will serve as the main access to both elementary schools. A parking area with approximately 58 spaces is proposed to be developed along the eastern portion of the new elementary school campus. The project will also construct designated vehicle and bus drop-off areas for each campus.

As part of the project’s operation, TK through 2nd grades will relocate from Elim Elementary to the new elementary school, leaving Elim with 3rd through 5th grades. Elim’s current student population will be reduced from approximately 1,000 to 500 students, and 24 classrooms (all portables) will be removed from its current total of 50 classrooms, leaving the Elim campus with approximately 26 classrooms. The project will increase overall student capacity from approximately 1,000 to 1,200 total students in TK through 5th grades. While each campus is anticipated to have a maximum of 60 staff, it is anticipated that some staff will be shared given the proximity of the schools.

The project is planned to begin construction in early 2022 and be completed by spring 2023.

Mitigation Measures: The District has incorporated into the project mitigation measures for potentially significant project impacts related to aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hydrology and water quality, noise, transportation, tribal cultural resources, and utilities and service systems. The mitigation measures are included in the Initial Study.

Public Review and Comment: Members of the public and interested agencies may review and submit written comments on the proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study. The documents are available for review at the Hilmar Unified School District Office, located at 7807 N. Lander Avenue, Hilmar, CA 95324, and on the District's website at the following link: <https://www.hilmarusd.org/notices>. The public review period will begin on Tuesday, February 23, 2021 and end on Thursday, March 25, 2021.

Please submit your comments no later than 5:00 pm on March 25, 2021 to:

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