

Hilmar Unified School District
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION
New Hilmar Unified Elementary School Project
(State Clearinghouse No. 2019110288)

Project Title: New Hilmar Unified Elementary School Project

Lead Agency and Project Sponsor: Hilmar Unified School District

Contact Person:

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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 mitigation measures into the project for potentially significant impacts related to air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, noise, transportation, and tribal cultural resources. The mitigation measures are included in the Initial Study.

Finding: As required by the California Environmental Quality Act, the District prepared an Initial Study for the project. Based on the Initial Study, the District determined that although the project could have a significant effect on the environment, there would not be a significant effect in this case because the District incorporated mitigation measures into the project that would avoid any significant effects of the project or render them less than significant. Therefore, it is the intent of Hilmar Unified School District to adopt a Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project.

	<u>2-18-2021</u>
Signature	Date
<u>Isabel Cabral-Johnson</u>	<u>HUSD Superintendent</u>
Print Name	Title