

4. Environmental Setting

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section provides a “description of the physical environmental conditions in the vicinity of the project, as they exist at the time the notice of preparation is published, ... from both a local and a regional perspective” (Guidelines Section 15125[a]), pursuant to provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines. The environmental setting provides the baseline physical conditions from which the lead agency will determine the significance of environmental impacts resulting from the proposed project.

4.2 LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.2.1 Existing Conditions

The Del Norte High School opened in 2009 with the capacity to serve approximately 2,150 students in grades 9 through 12. The school’s 2021-22 enrollment was 2,586 students in grades 9 through 12 (CDE 2022). The high school campus encompasses 62 acres and includes instructional, recreational, and other school-supporting facilities, such as food service facilities/kitchen, storage, administrative facilities, and custodial space. Instructional facilities include classrooms, fine art, music, science, and career and technical education classrooms; a gymnasium; a library/research center; an amphitheater; and a theater building in the north half of campus. These facilities are arranged in a circle around a large open courtyard. Recreational facilities include two softball and two baseball fields on the southeast corner of the campus; a lighted stadium with approximately 2,900-seat home-side bleachers and 880-seat visitor bleachers, for a total of 3,780 seats; two soccer fields and a football practice field with lights; and eight hardcourt basketball courts, an outdoor pool facility with lights, and eight tennis courts north of the soccer fields.

The stadium is lit by four 90-foot-high light poles. Stadium usage includes five varsity football games per year that may attract up to 5,000 spectators. In addition, the stadium is used for soccer, lacrosse, rugby, and field hockey practice and games and marching band practice. Most evenings, the stadium is scheduled for events until 10:00 pm. However, game evenings occasionally go as late as 11:00 pm due to after-game cleanup.

The pool is lit by four 50-foot light poles for swimming and water polo. The pool is used daily, and the lights are turned off by 10:00 pm. Three or four rows of portable bleachers are available for seating in the pool area.

The soccer fields have recently been equipped with six 90-foot LED lights. The soccer fields are used daily, and the lights are turned off by 10:00 pm.

Main access to the campus is provided from a signalized intersection at Nighthawk Lane and Potomac Ridge Road. Three additional access points are available—one on Nighthawk Lane, south of the main access, for

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buses and delivery trucks; one exit-only access on Del Sur Ridge Road to the north; and one gated access on Deer Ridge Road to the east.

The school has a total of 856 parking spaces accessed from the main entrance.

4.2.2 Surrounding Land Use

4.2.2.1 REGIONAL SETTING

The project site is in northeastern San Diego County on the northern border of the City of San Diego. San Diego County, including incorporated cities, cover approximately 4,261 square miles—65 miles north to south and 86 miles east to west. The county is bordered by Riverside County and Orange County to the north; Imperial County to the east; the nation of Mexico to the south; and the Pacific Ocean to the west. A majority of the land in the unincorporated area is open space or undeveloped and includes large tracts of federal, state, or regional parklands and agricultural production areas. Residential land uses account for the majority of the developed land in the unincorporated county.

4.2.2.2 LOCAL SETTING

Del Norte High School straddles unincorporated San Diego County and the City of San Diego and is part of two master planned communities—the western 40 acres is in the Black Mountain Ranch Community Plan in the City of San Diego, and the eastern 22 acres is in the 4S Ranch Specific Plan in the County of San Diego. The campus is surrounded by residential uses to the north across Lone Quail Road, east across Deer Ridge Road, south across Camino San Bernardo, and west across Nighthawk Lane. Design39Campus, a public school serving students from TK to 8th grade, is to the north across Del Sur Ridge Road.

The 4S Ranch Specific Plan includes uses such as residential, open space, commercial, industrial, public facilities, and schools uses. Black Mountain Ranch Community Plan includes uses such as residential, open space, recreational, commercial, residential, institutional, and mixed use. The varsity baseball and softball fields are on the county side of the high school campus.

4.2.3 General Plan and Zoning

The City's General Plan designates western part of the high school as Institutional & Public and Semi-Public Facilities, and it is zoned AR-1-1 (Agricultural-Residential minimum 10-acre lot). This area is part of the Black Mountain Ranch Community Plan.

The eastern portion of the project site, in unincorporated San Diego County, is designated Specific Plan by the County of San Diego General Plan and zoned RS (Residential – Single). This area is part of the 4S Ranch Specific Plan. The ballfields are on this eastern portion of the project site.

4.3 ASSUMPTIONS REGARDING CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts are defined as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts” (CA Code of Regulations, Title

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14, Section 15355). Cumulative impacts are the change caused by the incremental impact of the project evaluated in the EIR together with the incremental impacts from closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines states that cumulative impacts must be discussed when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considerable. It further states that this discussion must reflect the level and severity of the impact and the likelihood of occurrence, but not in as great a level of detail as for the project.

The information used in an analysis of cumulative impacts comes from one of two sources (per CA Code of Regulations, Title 14, Section 15130 [b][1]):

- A. A list of past, present, and probable future projects producing related cumulative impacts, including, if necessary, those projects outside the control of the agency.
- B. A summary of projections contained in an adopted general plan or related planning document, or in a prior environmental document which has been adopted or certified, which described or evaluated regional or area-wide conditions contributing to the cumulative impact.

Depending on the environmental category, the cumulative impact analysis in each topical section of this SEIR may use either source as appropriate. While the potential for cumulative impacts is confined to the project site and its immediate surroundings, cumulative spill light impacts, air quality, noise, and transportation impacts have the potential for impacts beyond the project site boundaries. Refer to Chapter 5, *Environmental Analysis*, for a discussion of the cumulative impacts associated with development and growth in the city and region for each environmental resource topic.

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